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JAN/FEB 2006

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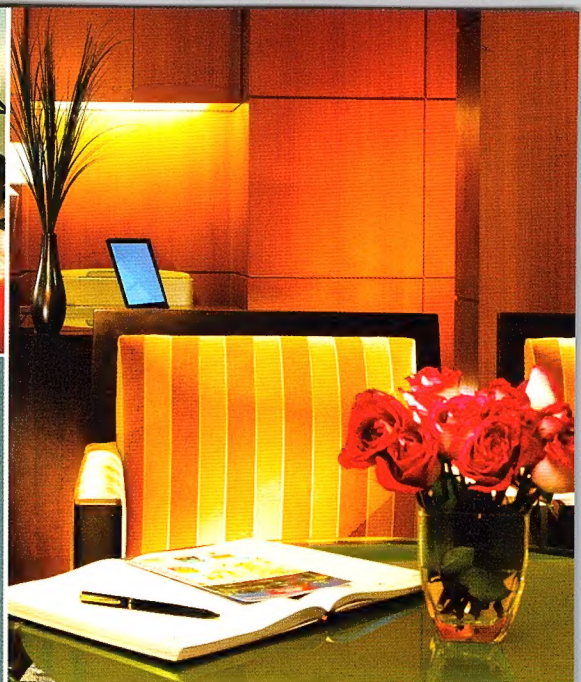
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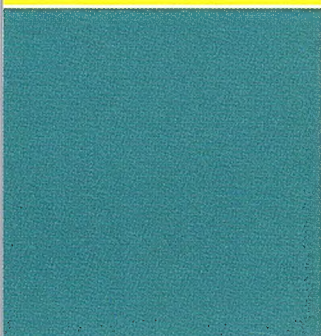
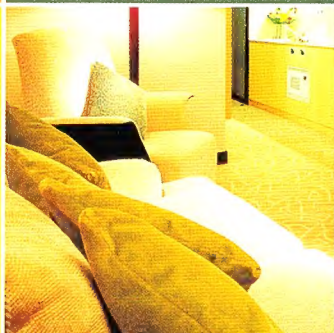
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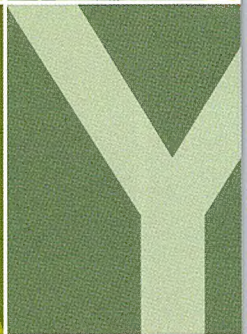
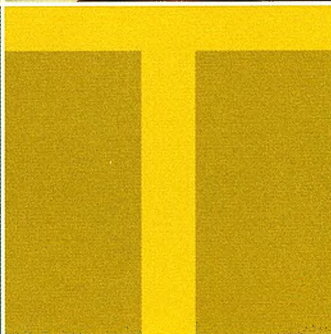
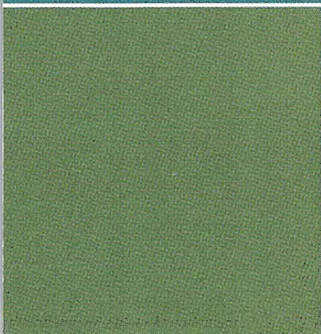


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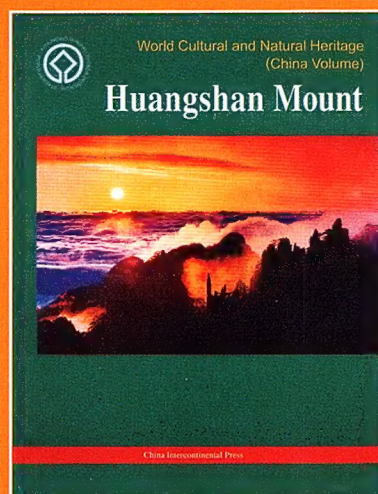
Mt. Huangshan, situated in the south of Anhui

Province, is one of the most famous scenic areas in China. Being put into the World Heritage List, it is also granted with two laurels of cultural heritage and natural heritage by the UNESCO's World Heritage Commission.

The landscape of the mountain is a typical granite hoodoo landform shaped during the long geological periods by several tectonic movements in the crust. Mt. Huangshan has long been famous for its strange-looking pine trees, grotesque rocks, sea of clouds and hot springs.

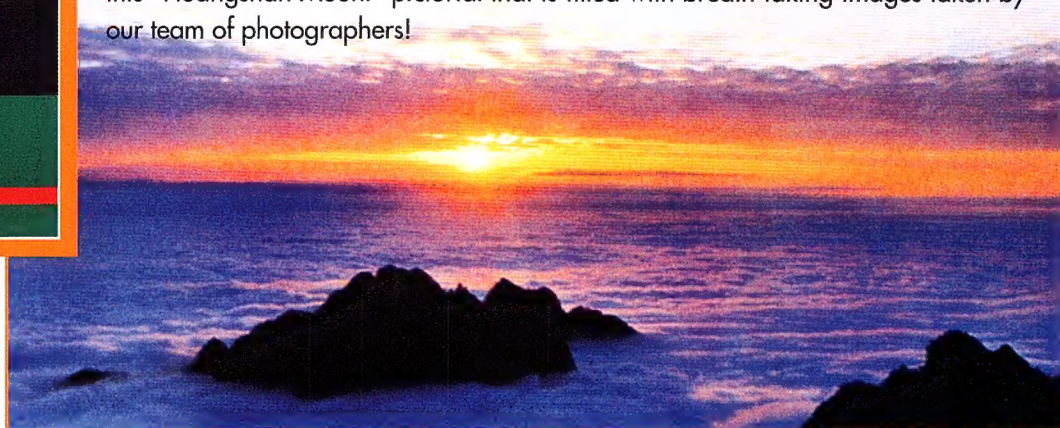
All over one thousand metres above sea level, there are 77 peaks in the scenic area of almost two hundred square kilometres. Granite rock forests and rock columns together with massive rocks scatter everywhere. Moreover, Mt. Huangshan is a diverse ecosystem with a treasure of wildlife. There are approximately 1450 species of plants, 300 species of vertebrates and 170 species of birds.

Combined unique scenery and magnificent sea of clouds, the beauty of Mt. Huangshan has continued to fascinate endless visitors. Catch a glimpse of its glory in this "Huangshan Mount" pictorial that is filled with breath-taking images taken by our team of photographers!



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Feature Story

The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal — Past & Present

Photos & Article • Xie Guanghui

The Grand Canal connects five of China's main river systems, including the Haihe, Yellow, Huaihe, Yangtze, and Qiantangjiang rivers. Cities located along the canal, such as Hangzhou (Zhejiang Province), Zhenjiang and Yangzhou (Jiangsu Province), Jinan and Linzi (Shandong Province), Tianjin, and Beijing have all flourished over hundreds of years.

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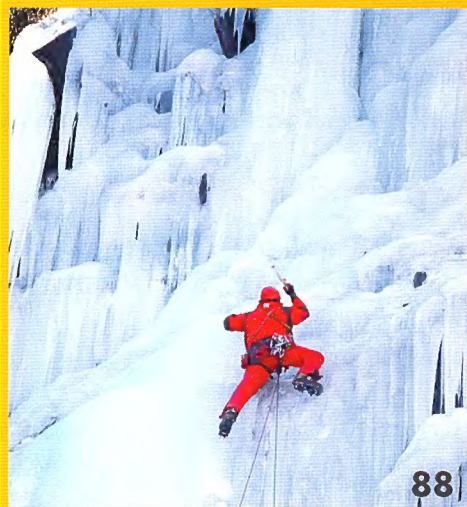
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Historical Background

As Mr. Lyle Lewis, the Managing Director of the hotel, introduced, Radisson Plaza Xing Guo Hotel Shanghai was first a five-star government hotel to receive leaders from the Beijing Government and other Chinese and foreign VIPs. Its 28 villas, built of French, British, German, American, Spanish and Canadian design, had received the most famous figures in China including Chairman Mao Zedong. Boosting 190 guestrooms including 40 suites of luxurious and contemporary design, the hotel now attracts more and more foreign travellers.

Exclusive Environment

Dining here is an entire enjoyment. For instance, the Li Palace Chinese restaurant located on the 4th floor serves an array of Cantonese specialities with Shanghaiese dishes. Eight elegantly designed VIP rooms feature the best location to enjoy the garden view. Two of these private rooms are even linked with balconies.

No matter you are on business or leisure travel, you must not miss to utilize the fully equipped Clark Hatch Fitness Centre, as recommended by Mr. Lewis. Perhaps, you may even walk for a few minutes' with friends to have a drink in the nearby Huaihai Road — a famous bar street in town.

Convention Centre Opens Soon

The construction of a new convention centre with a large capacity is going to be finished in early 2006. When it is opened, the complex will be the best venue to host various functions like weddings, business conferences or festive parties.



1. Mr. Lyle Lewis, Managing Director of the Hotel, in the vast hotel garden
2. The splendid lobby lounge
3. The elegant Superior Room
4. The Li Palace Chinese restaurant

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Yummy Yummy**Eat As You Can in Shenzhen**

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On the Way**Visiting Monasteries in Qinghai**

Photos & Article • Zhai Dongfeng

In early autumn our party of three hit the road from Beijing, heading to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau along National Highway 109. The road ahead being long, we were sure to encounter more difficulties along the way...

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Concealed by mountains on three sides, Turtle Bay is blessed with all the favourable conditions that induce turtles to land and lay their eggs: a beach open to the sea in a semi-tropical zone; little wind or waves; and clear water with more than 3 per cent salinity at a consistent temperature of about 28°C.

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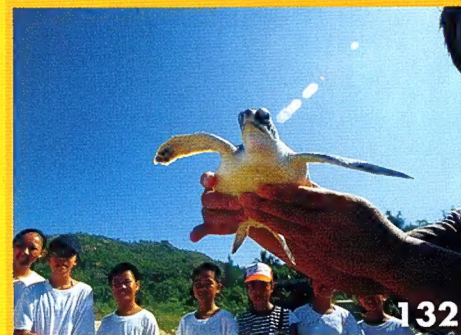
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A peaceful world of snow (by Li Ping)





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Consultants (In alphabetical order)

Ian Fok Chun Wan, Lam Chun,
Ma Chi Man, Ma Lin, Wong Tak Hoi,
James T. Wu, Howard Young

Director

Tchan Fou-li

Vice Director & Editor-in-Chief

Wang Miao

Deputy General Managers

Kathy Wong, James Jiang,
Connie Lee, Sylvia Ng

Executive Editor-in-Chief

Ma Yiu Chun

Deputy Editors-in-Chief

Tu Nai Hsien, Chan Yat Nin

Director of Editorial Department

Dianna Lau

Deputy Directors of Editorial Department

Xie Guanghui, Huang Yanhong

English Editors

Kristy Wong, Zuo Jun

Art Director

Billy Cheng

Senior Designer

M. Y. Li

Designers

Y. Y. Lau, Lily Lam,
Joan Yan, Joyce Lee

Advertising Manager

Yu Xifan

China Account Managers

Tung Wai Ning, Shi Tiantong

Manager of Sales & Marketing Department

Connie Lee (concurrent)

Business Development Manager

James Jiang (concurrent)

Director of Accounts & Administration Dept.

Kathy Wong (concurrent)

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E-mail: English Editorial Dept: edit-e@hkctp.com.hk

Advertising Dept: ad@hkctp.com.hk

Sales & Marketing Dept: mktg@hkctp.com.hk

Photo Library: plib@hkctp.com.hk

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No.301 Jan/Feb 2006

FROM THE EDITOR

Enjoy a Journey of Water

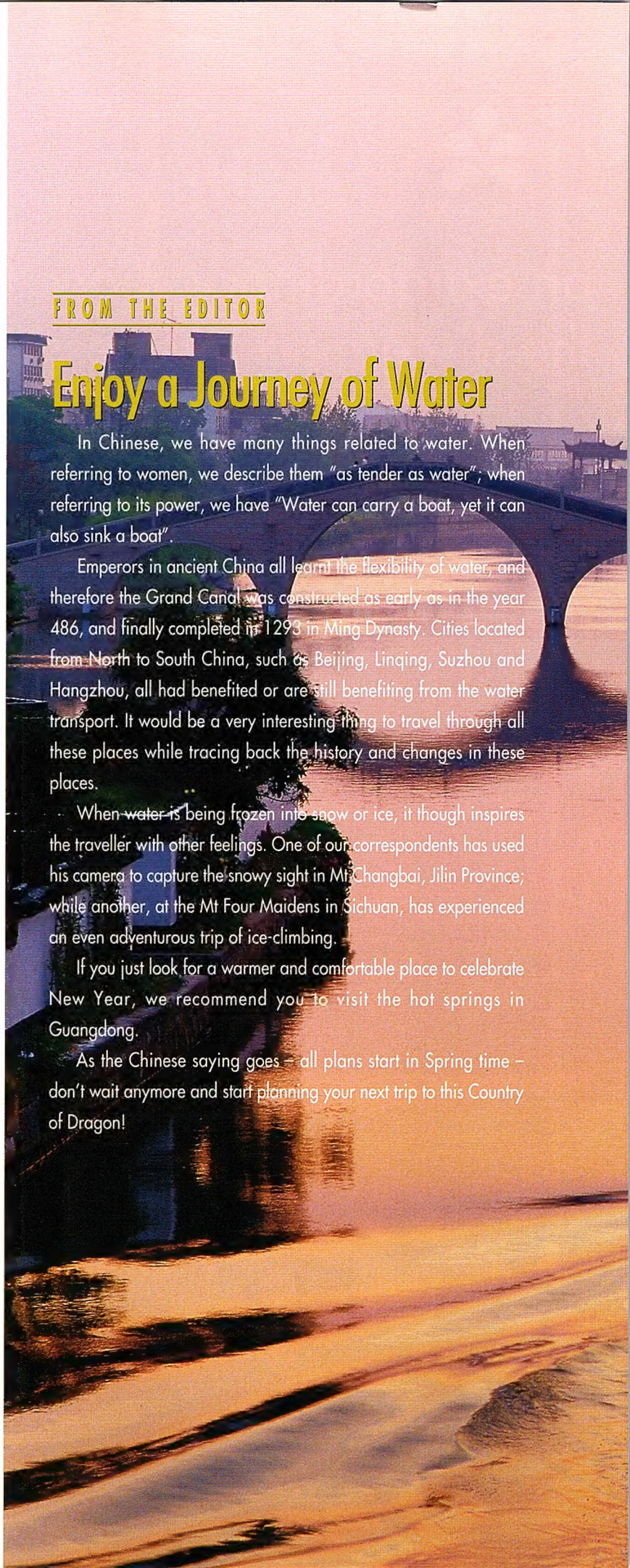
In Chinese, we have many things related to water. When referring to women, we describe them "as tender as water"; when referring to its power, we have "Water can carry a boat, yet it can also sink a boat".

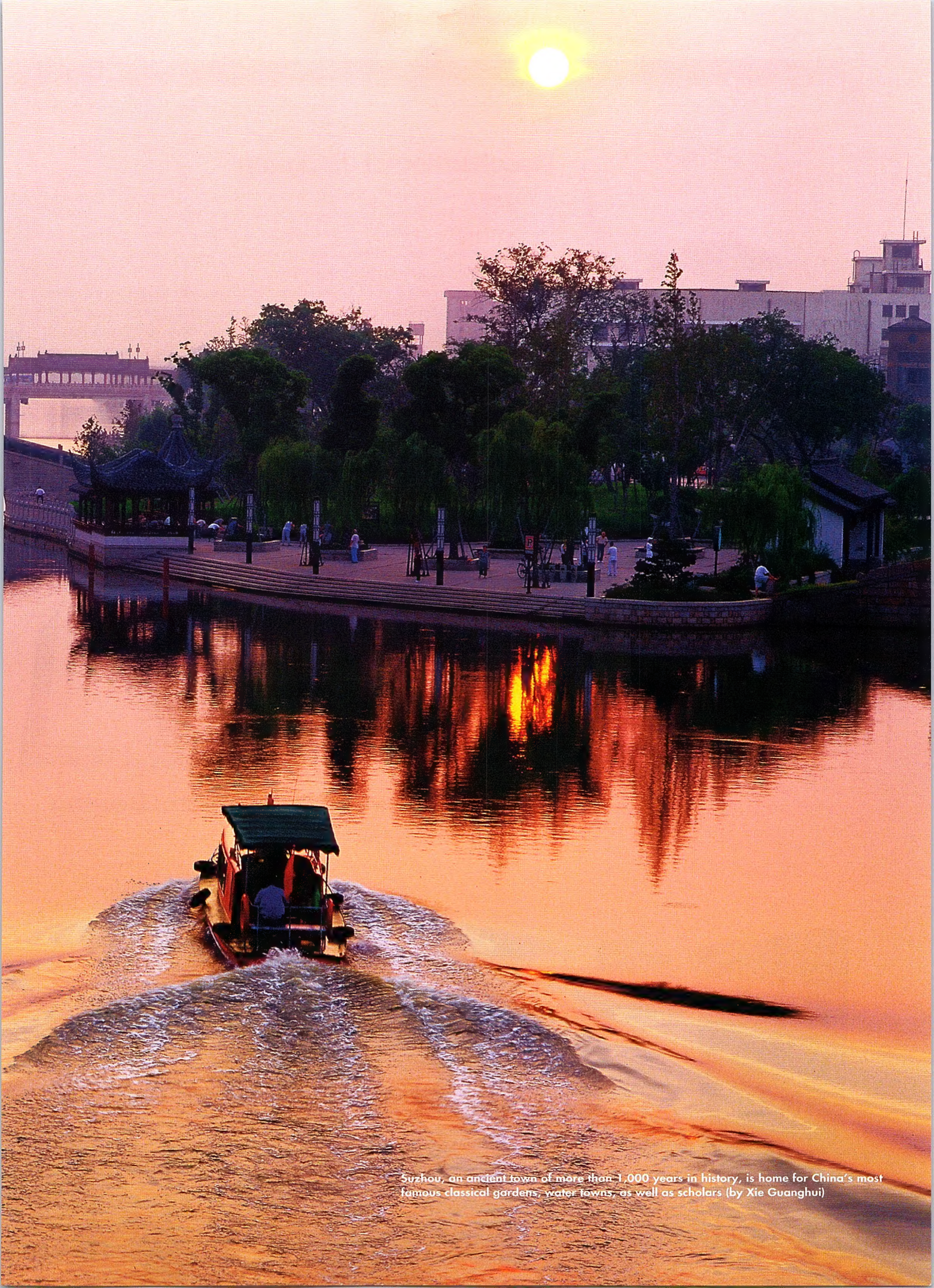
Emperors in ancient China all learnt the flexibility of water, and therefore the Grand Canal was constructed as early as in the year 486, and finally completed in 1293 in Ming Dynasty. Cities located from North to South China, such as Beijing, Linqing, Suzhou and Hangzhou, all had benefited or are still benefiting from the water transport. It would be a very interesting thing to travel through all these places while tracing back the history and changes in these places.

When water is being frozen into snow or ice, it though inspires the traveller with other feelings. One of our correspondents has used his camera to capture the snowy sight in Mt Changbai, Jilin Province; while another, at the Mt Four Maidens in Sichuan, has experienced an even adventurous trip of ice-climbing.

If you just look for a warmer and comfortable place to celebrate New Year, we recommend you to visit the hot springs in Guangdong.

As the Chinese saying goes – all plans start in Spring time – don't wait anymore and start planning your next trip to this Country of Dragon!





Suzhou, an ancient town of more than 1,000 years in history, is home for China's most famous classical gardens, water towns, as well as scholars (by Xie Guanghui)



Author: Ho Wai
First Edition: Oct 2005
Publisher: Liang You Co. Ltd
Price: HK\$160/ US\$20/ £16

Recollection of Jiangnan

The low-profile author (as he hasn't shown his name on the cover) was not born in Jiangnan*, however he has the deepest feelings for the area. Why? Reading the pictorial, the reader will find the answer, "One of the reasons why I (the author) am so fond of the Jiangnan is my love of water...memories flow through these waters, carrying not only the reality before you but also the mysteries of your past."

The Jiangnan through the eye of the author, therefore, is a place for recollecting memories — Shantang Street is not only a place to appreciate *ping tang* performance, it was where his sophisticated grandmother lived; classical gardens (*yuan lin*) are not just tourist destinations or world heritage sites, they have been where the author wandered around works of Chinese calligraphy and painting with his grandfather in childhood.

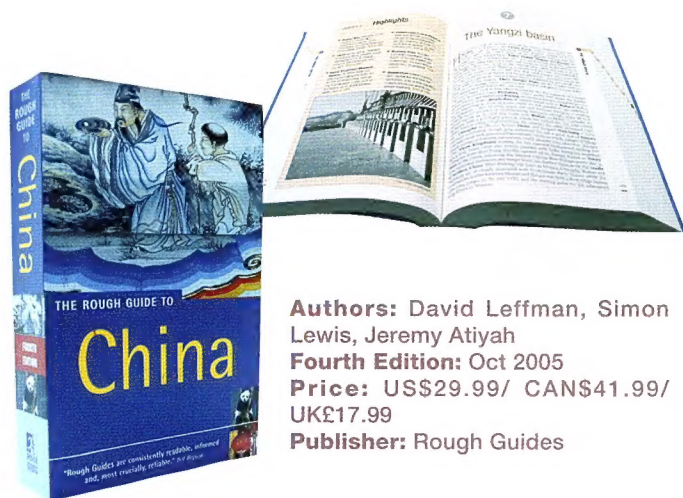
The delicate images and layout strongly reflect the characteristic of Jiangnan — tranquility. *Recollection of Jiangnan* requires the reader to get to know the place and feel in one's heart. Like a cup of Chinese green tea, you keep sipping slowly, you taste out more each time.

* Jiangnan is referred to the areas south of the Yangtze River, such as cities in Jiangsu Province

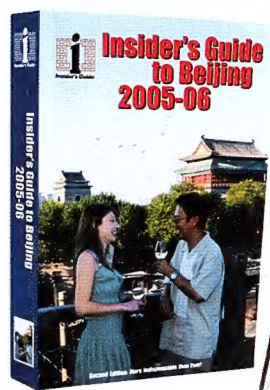
The Rough Guide to China

You have never been to China, you don't know a single Chinese character nor its pronunciation, but you would love to explore this country in the near future, then *The Rough Guide to China* will be your best "teacher" before you set off.

Have a read of the 35 recommended places in China by the authors, you can learn the most basic and smart travel concept. Certainly, going in-depth their contents and you will be equipped with extremely practical, up-to-date information on every aspects you have to consider. The three expatriate authors have accumulated rich experience in living or travelling in China (it's not surprising that they sometimes even know better than local Chinese!). It would be no doubt that one can regard the book as his/her most reliable and candid friend to get to know China.



Authors: David Leffman, Simon Lewis, Jeremy Atiyah
Fourth Edition: Oct 2005
Price: US\$29.99/ CAN\$41.99/ UK£17.99
Publisher: Rough Guides



Insider's Guide to Beijing 2005-06

You might have visited China's capital Beijing for many times on business trips, but how much do you know about the city? The publisher believes that the locals know the best of a place. Thus, the book has invited over 30 Beijing-based writers, introducing over 300 shops, 180 restaurants and 130 bars, adding with over 120 sidebar articles to fully portrait the fascinating capital city. Described as "one of the best, new, imaginative and informative guidebooks in a long time" by the *South China Morning Post*, the *Insider's Guide to Beijing* is no ordinary tourist guide book. To the surprise of the reader, one can even learn from the book how to import an American muscle car to China, or curious thing like what does the last emperor's nephew do for a living. Regardless when or how all information can be of practical to you, reading the *Insider's Guide* will always be a great enjoyment!

Editor: Adam Pillsbury
Publisher: Insider's Guide

Second Edition: Oct 2005
Price: US\$17.95

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Hotel's New Year Packages

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The offer includes a Superior Room at 888 yuan per room per night, and additional 250 yuan for an extra bed per

room. Kid is free below 12 years old sharing room with parents. Guests can enjoy a total work out free of charge in the well-equipped Clark Hatch Fitness Centre, featuring a glass frontage with panoramic garden views, a range of quality gym equipment, heated in-door swimming pool, sauna, etc.

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Reservations: (21) 6212 9998, ext.3150

Chinese New Year's Eve Dinner

Li Palace Chinese restaurant is offering three different sumptuous menus, RMB 328, 428 and 588 each + 15% per person in both the a la carte section and the private dining rooms.

Reservation: (21) 6212 9998 ext.3400.

Beijing's Qianmen Street with New Name

In order to build up its image as head of cultural development of the Chongwen District in the city, the time-honoured Qianmen (Front Gate) Street will be renamed as Tianjie, or Heavenly Street. The nearby area around the street will be gradually restored to its original look in the beginning of the contemporary Chinese history, where old-brand shops and characteristic hutongs are located.

China to Host World Design Congress in 2009

During the final session of the "Era05" World Design Congress taking place in late 2005, China beat candidates including Singapore, Montreal, Warsaw, and Brussels, and was chosen as the host country of the World Design Congress 2009. China also won the right to host the Annual Design Conference 2009 for the International Council of Graphic Design Associations (Icograda).

Yangjiang to Construct Marine Museum

The construction of the "Nanhai No. 1 Museum", or "China's Marine Silk Road Museum", which will feature to display more than 300,000 historical relics is planned to open for the public by 2007. It will mainly exhibit ancient vessels such as the Nanhai No. 1 ship and its contents, which have been salvaged from the South China Sea. Covering an area of more than 130,000 square metres in Hailing Island, Yangjiang, Guangdong Province, it will be the largest theme museum of its kind in Asia.

South China to Build Vast Grassland

Experts foresee that China's demand for fodder grains will soar to hit 500 million tons by 2020 despite an estimated fall in grain demand. Developing the southern grassland can not only maintain the stock at a safe level but also contribute to the improvement of the regional ecosystem. The vast grassland (about 13 million hectares) in south China will become the country's third largest livestock farming base with an output value surpassing that of the northern grassland.

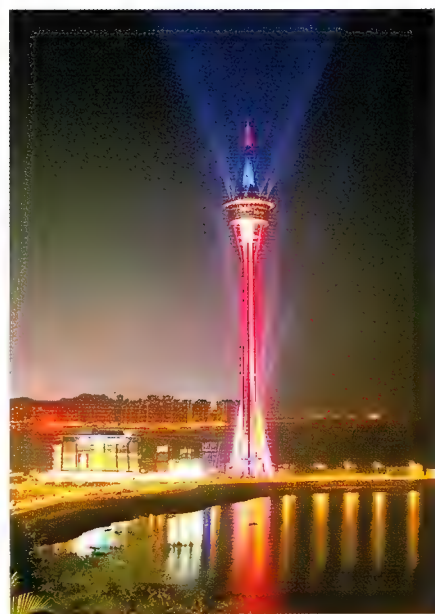
Facilities on Mt Jiuhua to Be Relocated

In order to preserve better the ecosystem of Mt Jiuhua, a famous Buddhist mountain in Anhui Province, the local government has decided to remove related management offices of the mountain, as well as other travel facilities to the foot of the scenic area. The relocated area of these building will be called New Street of Jiuhua. Besides, one-third of the architecture on the mountain will be dismantled in future years. Having opened for tourism for 25 years, the increasing number of tourists has been posing a threat to the natural environment of the mountain.



Trains to Lhasa to Be Launched

China will launch the first direct train from national capital Beijing to the remote Tibetan capital Lhasa on the world's highest rail route from July 1, 2006. Travellers can enjoy world-class tourist sites along the newly-built line during the 48-hour direct railway trip. The Beijing-Lhasa train will run at a speed of 160 km per hours on the plain, but will slow down at 120 km per hour when it reaches the Qinghai-Tibet section. Passengers will not feel altitude sickness on the way. In addition to Beijing, some other Chinese cities, including Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chengdu, will also launch direct railway passenger transportation to Lhasa as of July 1.

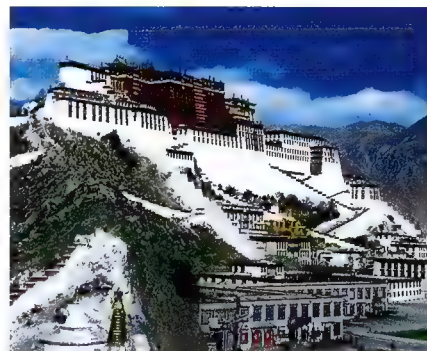


Macau to Increase Land Area

The Macau Special Administrative Region government is planning to increase Macau's land area by 13 percent in the coming years, from presently 3.6 sq km to 31.1 sq km. The land enlargement plan will be conducted through four separate land reclamation projects. One of the planned reclamation areas was located near the would-be Hong Kong-Macau-Zhuhai Bridge, which will link the three economic power-houses in Pearl River Delta region. The reclamation areas are to accommodate up to 120,000 people, while the city now has a population of 480,000.

Gold Roof of Potala Banned in 2006

Believed to have better preserve the structure the Potala Palace, a UNESCO world heritage site in Lhasa, Tibet, visitors will no longer have access to its golden roofs when the ongoing renovation project is completed this year. The seven golden roofs on the top of the stunning Red and White palaces are a must-see for travellers to the Potala. The palace presently opens 22 halls to visitors, the oldest of which is more than 1,300 years old. A showroom is also planned to be built down the hill in



the near future for the convenience of the elderly and handicapped visitors.

Xinjiang to Reduce Groundwater Tapping

Turpan Basin in Northwest China's Xinjiang plans to reduce groundwater tapping so as to preserve rare oasis on the scorching desert. Turpan Basin is China's lowest and most seething terrain. The groundwater level has dropped 20~30 metres lower than the level measured at the

beginning of 1980s. Besides, the population expansion in accompany with industrial and agricultural developments in the region is exhausting the limited groundwater resources. The over exploitation of groundwater has caused 833 out of 1,237 karez (an underground irrigation system) in the basin dry out.

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Tibet

Cruise Service Opens on Yarlung Zangbo River

In catering to the development of the Yarlung Zangbo Gorge Scenic Area, the first cruise service route has recently opened in Tibet. The cruise will start from the centre of scenic area located in Nyingchi to Paizhen Town in Milin County, composing a length of 120 km. Yarlung Zangbo Great Gorge winds with Mt. Namjagbarwa and stretches 196.3 km, at average depth of 5,000 metres. It is the longest and deepest gorge in the world.



Shanxi

Mt Wutai Listed as National Geological Park

Mt Wutaishan (Five Terraces), Taihang Gorge in Huguan County, and the ice cave of 10,000 years in Ningwu, are all recently listed as National Geological Parks. Mt Wutaishan features rising and falling ridges of mountains, exotic rocks, crisscrossed gullies, crystalline waters and towering green forests; the Taihang Gorge features cliffs, strange rocks, waterfalls, ponds and limestone caves; and the ice cave in Ningwu does not melt all the year, and is the largest among its kind in China.

Guizhou

New Airport in Liping

Located in Liping County in Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province, the Liping Airport has officially opened to traffic. Involved with an investment of RMB 230 million, it is the four public airport constructed in Guizhou, the other three being the Tongren, Xingyi, and Anshun airports. After opening the traffic, the Liping Airport first launches the routes flying between Liping and Guilin in Guangxi, Zhangjiajie in Hunan, and Guiyang (Guizhou's capital city). Routes to Chongqing, Guangzhou, Kunming, Beijing and Shanghai will be developed later.



Guangzhou

New Self-service Check-in at Baiyun Airport

The China Southern Airlines has introduced China's first-ever automatic check-in boarding system at the new Baiyun International Airport. Four new self-service counters are available for Internet customers, and they can select their seat and receive boarding passes within 30 seconds. Currently the service is only available for one domestic route between Guangzhou and Changsha, but the airline is planning to significantly expand this service and making it available for all flights.

Travel

Ginkgo, the Favourite Tree of Chinese

According to public survey conducted by the Chinese Society of Forestry, nearly 99 per cent of the interviewees, mostly Internet users, vote the ginkgo as the national tree of China. Other nominees included davidia, or "dove tree", eucommia and arborvitae, dawn redwood, etc. Many Chinese believe that the country should have its own national tree. The ginkgo is unique to China in which it looks splendid with its straight trunk and thick crown, and it also medical and economic value.

Culture

Traditional Festivals Registered as Domain Names

According to recent record, over 40 traditional Chinese festivals have been registered as domain names, including the Lantern Festival and the Double Ninth Festival. The names of minority nationality festivals have also been used, such as the Water-Sprinkling Festival of the Dai ethnic group. The enthusiasm about registration of Chinese domain names shows the Chinese are beginning to realize the importance of the protection of traditional Chinese culture on the Internet.

Guangxi

Ecosystem Exhibition Centre Opens

A new group of museums featuring traditions and customs of ethnic groups in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is going to be constructed. They are going to introduce to the public the Heiyi (Black Clothes) Zhuang nationality in Napo County, Miao nationality in Rongshui, Han nationality in Lingtian Township, Lingchuan County, and Hakka nationality in Liantang Town, Babu District, Hezhou city. The practice of building these type of museums in Guangxi started from 2003.





Yunnan

Memorial Hall of Hump Route Opens

Opened in October 2005 in Nujiang Lisu Nationality Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, the memorial hall was in commemoration of the famous WWII air route Hump (*Tuo Feng*). The hall is the first of its kind in China to display the wreckage of the planes flying on the 500-mile line. Opened in 1942, the Hump was the dangerous Himalayan route between India and China, along which American and Chinese pilots carried war supplies to aid the Chinese people's war of resistance against Japanese aggression during WWII.

Tourism

Ten Cities Expunged from Environment-friendly Title

The State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) has recently taken out 10 Chinese cities from "environment-friendly" title after these cities failed related tests. These cities include Haikou, Daqing, Rongcheng, Wendeng, Ningbo, Shenzhen, Suzhou, Taicang, Yantai and Laizhou. SEPA said that they have to improve their environmental work in order to get back on the list. But the cities of Hangzhou, Zhuhai and Jiangyin (Jiangsu Province) have passed the SEPA exam.

Beijing

Beijing Launches Wildlife Protection Centre

The centre aims to provide a safe haven and a breeding program for endangered species. A hotline has been set up so that people can access information when they need help.

Shanxi

Pingyao Ancient City Launches English Website

In order to better introduce the heritage Pingyao ancient city to the world, the bilingual website has been released. The website has expensively introduced the history, scenic spots, information of dining and accommodation, as well as special produce and festivals in Pingyao. Website: www.pingyaotrip.com

Culture

Marine Silk Road Applied for World Cultural Heritage

Cultural Experts have tried to apply the Marine Silk Road of China, which passed nine eastern coastal cities in China, to become a World Cultural Heritage. Among the nine places, Guangzhou, Quanzhou and Ningbo were the three major cities of the Marine Silk Road. The experts suggested that from 2006, they would invite, on an irregular basis, officials and experts from home and abroad to organize academic lectures on the Marine Silk Road, in purpose to provide a platform for authoritative research on China's Marine Silk Road and help preserve its relics.

Zhejiang

New Scenic Sight of Thousand-Island Lake

Huangshanjian Peak has been established as a new spot to view the panorama of Qiandaohu, or Thousand-Island Lake. Standing 266 metres above water, Huangshanjian is the highest peak in Pearl Islets, coving an area of 600 *mu* (about 40 hectares).



Zhejiang

Han Meilin Art Gallery Opens in Hangzhou

Covering an area of 3,677.2 square metres, the gallery also hosts a workshop of 530 square metres. The three-storey main building features display of Han's works, documents, and cafes. The talented is not only good at painting and calligraphy, but also has the high accomplishments in pottery art, sculpture, etc. He specially elected over 1,000 excellent and elegant works specially to donate Hangzhou citizens. And the Hangzhou Municipal Committee and Hangzhou Government decided to construct the Gallery in Hangzhou Botanical Garden to to enrich and extend West Lake culture and increase the humane landscape.



Hunan

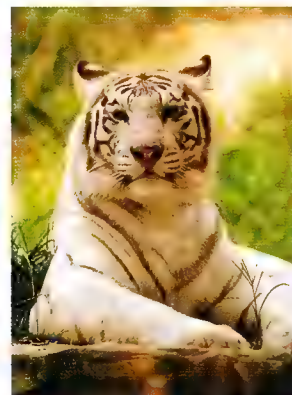
Buddhist Music Hall Opens on Mt Hengshan

The hall is the first one opened in China. Buddhist music (*fan bei*) flourished during the Tang Dynasty, yet it was believed to be first created by Cao Zhi (192—232). He was the son of the powerful warlord Cao Cao during the Three Kingdoms period. Cao Zhi combined Buddhist chanting with Chinese traditional music, which could be performed in singing and dancing. The introduction of Buddhism to Mt Hengshan can be dated to 1,500 years ago.



Jan 27 ~ Feb 15 **China**
Welcoming Year of the Dog

The Lunar New Year, or "Spring Festival", is the best time to experience the magnificent Chinese traditions. Lion dance, floral parade, firecrackers or fireworks, overnight flower market, giving the auspicious Red Pockets — all kinds of celebrations will be happening through the country. Don't miss a chance to be part of these celebrations of the Year of the Dog!



Now ~ March 31 **Macau**
Visiting White Tigers

TurboJET offers a package which travellers can visit the rare white tigers. The package includes: TurboJET Hong Kong-Macau round trip economy class tickets; visiting two white tiger cubs; tea buffet at 360° Cafe of Macau Tower; and Macau Tower Observation Lounge Entrance Ticket. For enquiries and booking, visit China Travel Service: (852) 2998 7888/ Shun Tak Travel: (852) 2283 2626

Now ~ Jan 31 **Taiwan**
Kinmen Cormorant Season Tour

Organized by Traffic Bureau, Kinmen County Government, the Cormorant Bird-watching Area welcomes interested parties to watch the passage bird in winter while appreciating the beautiful scenery of the area. Contact: 82-324174

2006
JAN/FEB

Feb 9 ~ March 12 **Hong Kong**
Hong Kong Arts Festival

The 34th HKAFF will present a total of 106 performances of 48 different programmes featuring 40 performing groups from overseas and local with five exhibitions. The Festival will present a superb production of *Don Giovanni* from the Semper Opera Dresden and Opera Nuremberg, to celebrate Mozart's 250th birthday. Other highlights include *The History Boys* by National Theatre of Britain, theatrical spectacle of kung-fu *A Touch of Zen*, as well as Chinese operas. To book tickets on-line, visit the website: www.hk.artsfestival.org



Jan 7 ~ 11 **Heilongjiang**
Sun Island Ice-Sculpturing Competition

The first phrase of the competition have started in Dec 2005, and the second phrase will kick off in Jan 2006. All ice-sculpturing professionals will gather in Harbin, the capital city of Heilongjiang to create beautiful works.

Feb 12 **Hong Kong**
Standard Chartered Marathon 2006

The marathon has become one of the most spotlight-welcome events in the city. This year, celebrating its 10th Anniversary, the Organizer offers HK\$200,000 to the winners who are Permanent Residents of Hong Kong. The whole event involves a serious of training programmes in advance, Cheering Slogan Competition, and other related activities, which excite both the runners or the audience.

Feb 15 ~ 17 **Shanghai**
China Food & Wine Festivals & Shows

The Chinese food and beverage industry is rapidly improving. High-quality food ingredients are in great demand, while China is also becoming an increasingly valuable production area. The Fi Asia-China 2006 provides a platform to traders to discuss their projects with their potential clients.



Now ~ Mar 19 **Hong Kong**
"The Silk Road: Treasures from Xinjiang" Exhibition

The exhibition features in 115 sets of invaluable treasures collected from various museums, archaeological institutions and cultural departments in Xinjiang. Visitors will be able to see at close range the well-preserved ancient Xinjiang mummies and a wooden corpse, exhibits that uncover the mystery of the region's ancient burial practices.

Space Adventures at the JSLC

Photos • Zhang Tongsheng et al Article • Hu Yang



Both of China's manned space missions, Shenzhou 5 piloted by Yang Liwei and Shengzhou 6 helmed by Nie Haisheng and Fei Junlong, were launched from the China Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre (JSLC). Previously a classified site accessible to only a select few, the centre was recently opened to domestic tourists. Our correspondents watched the launch of Shenzhou 6 and its subsequent re-entry and landing in Siziwang Banner in Inner Mongolia. They even toured the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre.



Soaring High Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre

Domestic tourists may tour the launch centre when no space mission launches are imminent.

Shenzhou Spacecraft Launch Site

Tourists are now allowed to visit the launch site for the Shenzhou spacecraft as part of the centre's efforts to educate the public about China's space programme. A new page of astronautics history was written when China launched its first unmanned spacecraft, Shenzhou 1, in 1999. When Shenzhou 3 took off in 2002, a dummy that could simulate

physiological human reactions to space travel was on board, as part of preparations for a manned mission. Then finally, in 2003, Yang Liwei became the first Chinese astronaut to travel into space when Shenzhou 5 was launched from Jiuquan.

DFH-1 Launch Site

At 9:36 p.m. on April 24, 1970, the DFH-1 (DFH for Dongfang Hong or "East is Red") satellite, the result of thousands of scientists' hard work over a three year period, was carried into space by the Changzheng

Previous page:
Launch Site of Shenzhou 6

1. At the launch of Shenzhou 6
2. Inside the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre. The spacecraft in this photo is Shenzhou 6
3. Astronauts Nie Haisheng and Fei Junlong

(Long March) 1 Rocket. Ten minutes later, the 172-kilogram satellite entered its orbit as planned. The successful launch of Dongfang Hong laid the cornerstone for China's research into spacecraft manufacturing, astronautics information building, remote sensing and tracking and other astronautics technologies.

Rocket Testing Centre

Here the final assembling of rockets takes place. After technicians have put together all the stages of the rocket, it is transported horizontally to the launch site. When there is no launch mission, the testing centre is open to domestic tourists.

Dongfeng Site Exhibition Centre

Here visitors will find a comprehensive record of the history of the Dongfeng Site, including photos and displays recounting visits by important government officials, rocket debris collected after launches,

models of rockets and satellites, as well as an exhibit on photoemission sites. The exhibition centre provides detailed documentation of the site's development over different periods and records of launches that took place at different sites.

Dongfeng Martyrdom Park

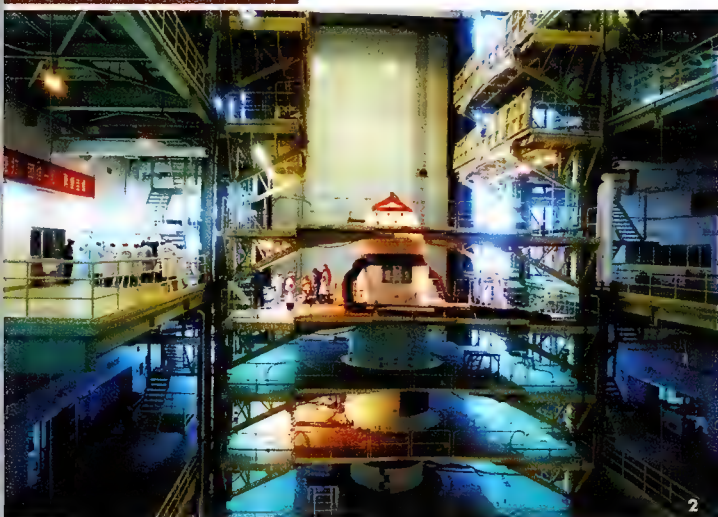
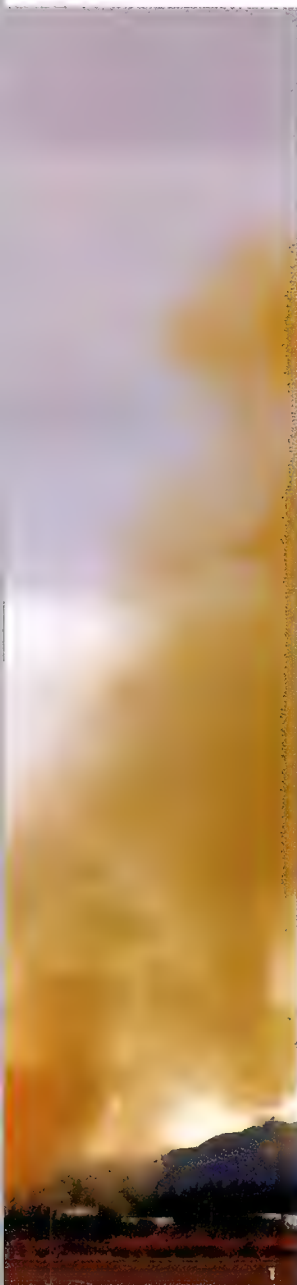
At the Dongfeng Martyrdom Park, visitors may view the tomb of General Nie Rongzhen, a key military figure in the Long March and the founding of the People's Republic of China. His ashes are kept in a glass casket before the headstone. Just in front of the casket sits a white marble plate upon which 93 roses have been inscribed to represent each year of General Nie's long and illustrious life. An inscription on an obelisk inside the tomb reads "Memorial of the Dongfeng Martyrs" in General Nie's own handwriting. Altogether, 604 graves, the final resting places of generals, soldiers, senior engineers and staff, surround the obelisk.

Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre

The name of the centre is a little misleading. In fact, the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre is not located within the city of Jiuquan, Gansu Province. Built in 1958 on the massive Ejia plain 210 km east of Jiuquan, the Centre is the country's largest launch site for space rockets, satellites and rockets for meteorological research. It boasts a comprehensive and reliable space vehicle launch facility capable of sending vehicles into lower and mid-range orbits. It was the first such centre for testing and launching missiles and satellites in China.

All-inclusive ticket for JSLC: 150 yuan

Date	Event
Apr 24, 1970	China's first satellite is launched at Jiuquan
Nov 26, 1975	China's first recoverable photo surveillance satellite is launched at Jiuquan
May 18, 1980	The country's first long-distance transport missile launched from Jiuquan arrives at its planned destination in the Pacific
Sept 20, 1981	For the first time, a rocket carries three satellites into space
Nov 20, 1999	The nation's first spacecraft is launched
Oct 15, 2003	China's first manned spacecraft, Shenzhou-5, is successfully launched
Oct 12, 2005	The flight of Shenzhou-6 marks the first time China has sent two astronauts into space at the same time
1958 ~ 2005	Of China's 43 domestically made satellites, 33 are launched from Jiuquan, of which 17 are equipped with re-entry systems; Jiuquan also successfully launches close to 1,000 strategic missiles



Back Down to Earth Siziwang Banner

However far a spacecraft may travel, it must make a return journey. And the first place a returning Chinese astronaut sets foot after hurtling through space is Siziwang Banner. Like Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre, it has become a tourist attraction.

A Favourable Landing Site

Siziwang Banner is at the centre of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, about 100 km from the region's capital Hohhot, with Mongolia to the north and Xilinguole to the east. In choosing a landing site, careful consideration of topographical conditions must be made to ensure the safety of the spacecraft and its passengers. The massive, generally flat plains of Honggeersumu are highly favourable for both touching down and cooling off once the module has landed. For these reasons, Amu Gulang Pasture in Honggeersumu was chosen as the landing site for Shenzhou 6.

The knowledge of the local herdsmen has proved invaluable in the search for bits of spacecraft gone astray. At times when even the most advanced machinery has failed to guide the recovery teams, they invariably find their way to the scattered missing pieces. Each time a recovery team has to enter the pastures, the herdsmen always open the gates for them. Even though it takes more than five years for new grass to grow in the pasturelands damaged by

cars, the local herdsmen have never complained.

Shenzhou Aobao (Shenzhou Camp)

Siziwang Banner used to be just one of many small towns in Inner Mongolia. However, after it was chosen as the landing site for Shenzhou 5 two years ago, it began to attract more attention.

To date, the only sign of commemoration is an unembellished column that marks the landing site of Shenzhou 5. Nevertheless, following the successful launch of Shenzhou 6, the local government has decided to build a colossal "Shenzhou Aobao" to memorialize the event.

Today Aobao ('heap' in Mongolian) are mainly used as sacrificial alters and can be made from piles of stones, earth or grass. In the past, Aobao started off as landmarks that guided the Mongols over the vast plains during the development of their civilization. The "Shenzhou Aobao" will be comprised of a base, a pagoda-like body, Aobao walls and the Shenzhou return module. Thus, the "Shenzhou Aobao" will symbolically join together astronautics culture and Mongolian culture.

The Shenzhou Aobao will be round and, following Mongolian tradition, it will be divided into nine floors, with nine steps on each floor. This will make altogether 81 steps.



Translated by Hu Jun

1. Nie Haisheng and Fei Junlong landing at Siziwang Banner
2. Inside the Launch Centre
3. The intersection to the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre
4. Wentiang is where astronauts stay at the Launch Centre
5. Nie Haisheng and Fei Junlong planting trees to commemorate the success of Shenzhou 6
6. The launch site of JSLC

Tips for the Traveller

Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre

Transportation: Tourists are advised to go to Jiuquan or Jiayuguan first to join the local tours.

Border pass: A typical tour will include both the JSLC and Ejin Huyang Forests. Most travel agencies in Jiayuguan or Jiuquan run such tours. Travellers are advised to apply about half a month prior to planned departure.

Travel Agencies

Jiuquan

1. Jiuquan International Travel Agency Add: 42 Cangmen Street, Jiuquan Tel: (937) 261 4319
2. Jiuquan Astronautics Travel Agency Add: 7 Youdian Street, Jiuquan Tel: (937) 266 5569

Jiayuguan

1. Gansu Jiayuguan International Travel Agency
Add: 2 North Shengli Road, Jiayuguan Tel: (937) 6281 826
2. Jiayuguan Xiongguan International Travel Agency
Add: 1 North Xinhua Road, Jiayuguan Tel: (947) 622 6258

Accommodation:

Jiuquan

1. Jiuquan Hotel
Add: 33 Jiefang Road, Jiuquan Tel: (937) 261 4211
2. Jiuquan Longteng Hotel
Add: 31 South Donghuan Road, Jiuquan Tel: (937) 261 2491

Jiayuguan

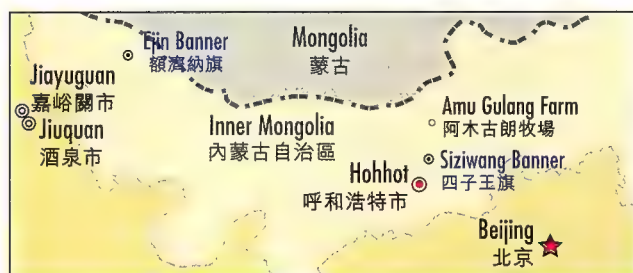
1. Great Wall Hotel
Add: 6 West Jianshe Road, Jiayuguan Tel: (937) 622 6306
2. Jiugang (Group) Jiayuguan Hotel
Add: 1 North Xinhua Road, Jiayuguan Tel: (937) 620 1588

Siziwang Banner

Transportation: It takes about 1.5 hour by car to travel the 90 km between Hohhot and Wulanhua Town, the prefecture government of Siziwang Banner. Honggeersumu, the landing site of Shenzhou 6, is 80 km away from Wulanhua. There is one bus departs in the morning from Wulanhua to Honggeersumu. Fare: 20 yuan.

Accommodation: Siziwangqi Hotel (2-star), a standard room at 180 yuan.

Contact of local tourism bureau: (474) 521 4444





Good Old Days of Hong Kong

◇

Tens of years have passed, and the cityscape as well as living style of Hong Kong have been widely changed, almost not realized by every hustling citizen. But thanks to some photo enthusiasts who captured the past scenery of the territory, we can witness how the society has developed in a pace much rapid beyond our imagination all these years.

◇

Having just celebrated his 90-year-old birthday on October 2005, Mr. Tchan Fou-Li, the Director of the Hong Kong China Tourism Press, is a renowned photographer who has devoted himself at photography activities for more than 60 years.

Being an amateur photographer since 1920s, Tchan has filmed plenty of black-and-white pictures which reflected the early fishing life of Hong Kong. These photos developed by Tchan between 1920~1950 have all become invaluable treasure for both elder generation of the territory to aftertaste their good old days, and young photographers who may be more familiar with digital cameras and Photoshop to create images.

◇

Grandma and Daughter (Aberdeen — 1961)

This photo was taken in the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter in Hong Kong South. Tchan was carrying his camera with him on the boat when heading to the Tai Pak Floating Restaurant. When he saw the warm and pleasant scene of this pair of grandmother and daughter, he took a picture of them immediately.



Kong

Photos • Tchan Fou-Li Article • Chan Yat Nin







◀ Pottinger Street

(Paddy Street)
(Central — 1960s)

Sandwiched between Queen's Road Central and Hollywood Road in Central, the time-honoured Pottinger Street may be the only "lucky" old street still preserved in the financial hub of Hong Kong. Under the sunlight, people were walking up or down the street, reflecting a lively ambience. The street has become one of the most famous scenes to witness the old Hong Kong today.

◀ Des Voeux Road West

(Sheung Wan — 1960s)

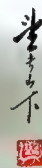
Des Voeux Road was one of the major roads constructed in the early ages when Hong Kong was opened as a trading port. To this date, some old residences still reflect a taste of nostalgia from Des Voeux Road West to Sheung Wan district. Standing in the middle of a road, this rickshaw man has easily captured the picture's focus.



Below Amah Rock

(Sha Tin — 1957)

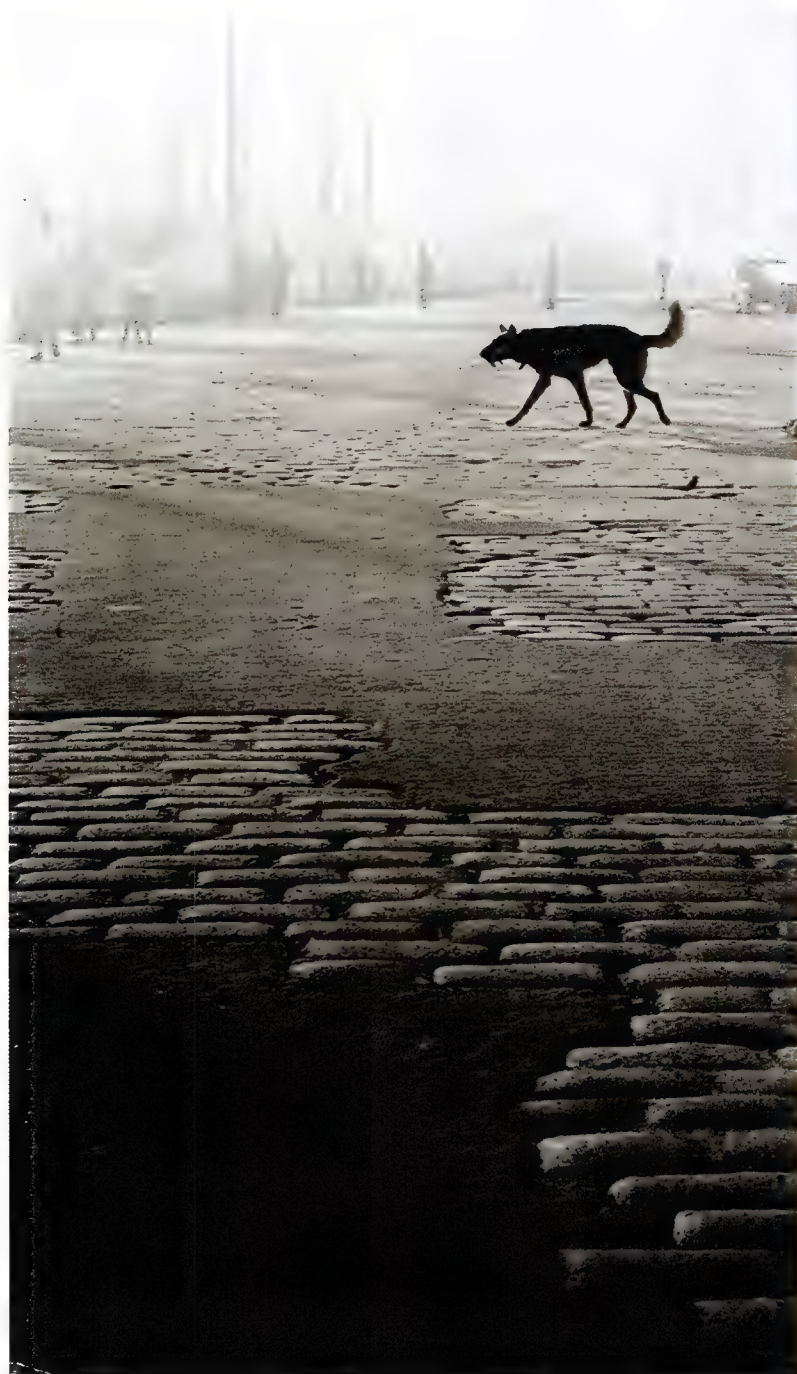
Such an idyllic Amah Rock located in Sha Tin can never be seen in Hong Kong today. Under the morning rays, the fields and villages appear exceptionally captivating. The thin layer of mist has also contrasted beautiful and sharp silhouettes of the hills. Will one miss this un-urbanized territory?



Shau Kei Wan

(Shau Kei Wan—1960s)

The picture has presented a moment in the morning in the fishing port more than 40 years ago. An interesting contrast is made between the big ship and the small sampan holding two fishing women.



The Wanderer

(Sheung Wan—1955)

The photo was taken at the Sheung Wan port in a misty day. A dog was wandering a desolate flagstone street covered by irregular shapes of asphalt. When Tchan first came to settle in Hong Kong, he had no idea about his future. Seeing the dog, he but felt they were both lonely wanderers in the world.



Biography of Tchan Fou-Li

Tchan Fou-li was born in 1916 in Guantang Township, Chao'an County, Guangdong Province and graduated in 1935 from Guangdong Provincial Second Normal School. The following year he left for Southeast Asia to earn a livelihood, working first as a shop assistant, later was engaged in trade himself. He took up photography in 1944 in Vietnam and settled in Hong Kong in 1955. For 60 years, he has been working on his business while pursuing photographic creation in his spare time.

In his early years his enthusiasm lay in photomontage and

salon photography. He advocated a combination of documentary and aesthetic expressions in early 60s, and strived hard to probe inwardly. Gradually he created a style all his own—a fusion of poetic feelings and aesthetic traditional Chinese culture.

His works have always been selected in international photographic exhibitions, while more than 200 of them were awarded in international salon of photography. In 1980, he established the Hong Kong China Tourism Press which published the *China Tourism* monthly magazine.

The Beijing–Hangzhou Grand Canal Past & Present

Beijing–Hangzhou Grand Canal

Sketch Map of the Grand Canal



The Grand Canal is as well-known as the Great Wall among China's grandest constructions of ancient history. However, from my perspective, the merits of the former are far greater than those of the latter.

Stretching 1,782 km (various records report lengths from 1,764 to 1,794 km), the Grand Canal is more than 10 times as long as the Suez Canal (170 km), which links the Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea, and almost 20 times longer than the Panama Canal (81.3 km), which joins the Pacific and Atlantic oceans in Central America. The canal connects five of the country's main river systems, including the Haihe, Yellow, Huaihe, Yangtze, and Qiantangjiang rivers. Cities located along the canal, such as Hangzhou (Zhejiang Province), Zhenjiang and Yangzhou (Jiangsu Province), Jining and Linqing (Shandong Province), Tianjin, and Beijing have all flourished over hundreds of years.

The Great Wall was originally built as a defense against invaders, but it also hindered the country's communications with the outside world. By contrast, the Grand Canal has continually functioned as an important transportation channel between the North and South regions, while preventing floods and irrigating the lands it has flowed through for almost 1,000 years. That is why I value it over the Great Wall.

Formation of the Grand Canal

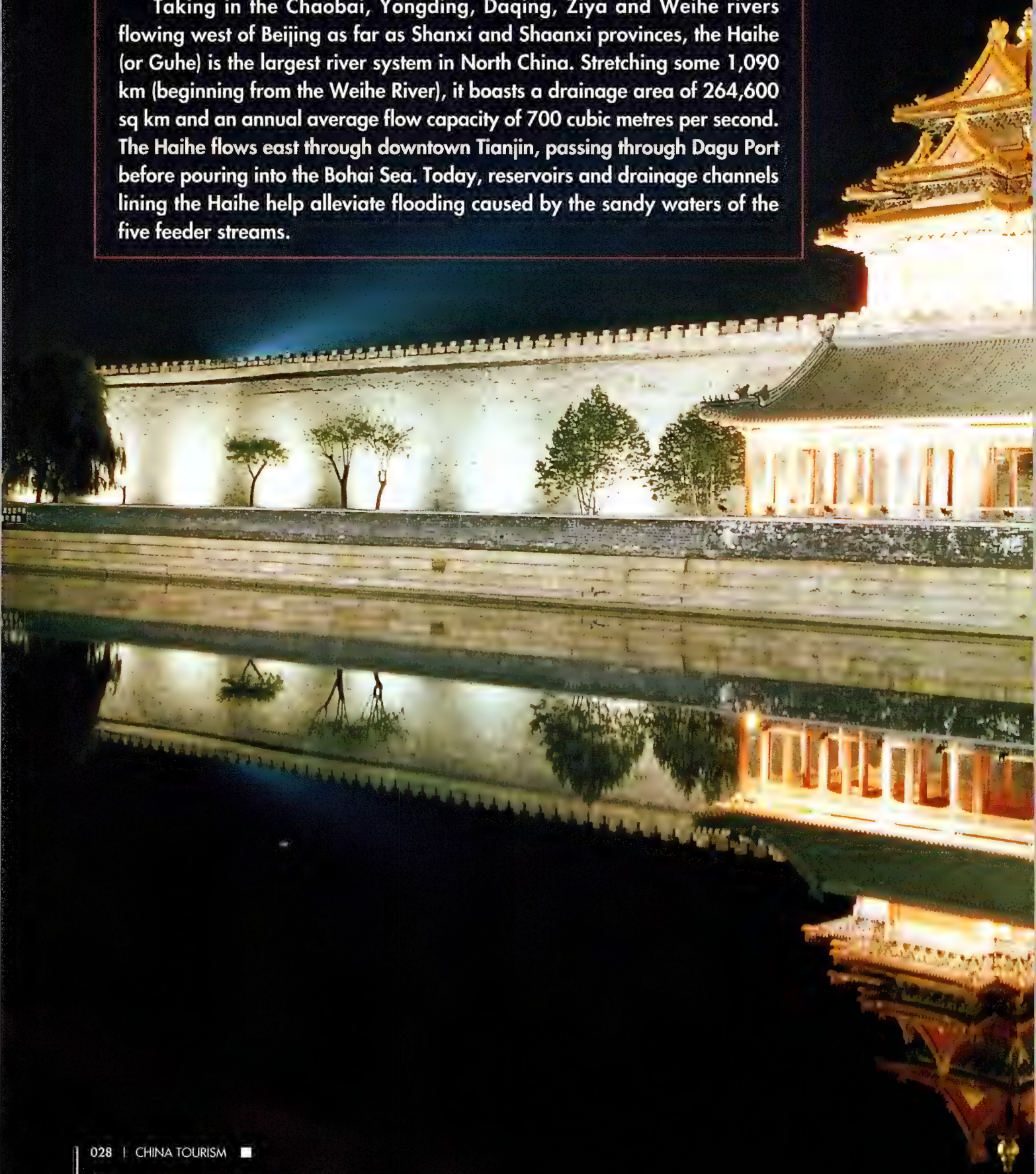
The canal can be traced back to the late Spring & Autumn Period (or early Warring States Period). In 486 B.C., Emperor Fucha of the Wu State, who previously ruled areas south of the Yangtze, became determined to gain control of the Qi State in Central China. As part of his plan, he ordered the excavation of the 170-km Hangou Canal to connect the cities of Yangzhou and Huaiyin, and thereby link the Yangtze and Huaihe rivers. The result was the first artificial canal ever built in China.

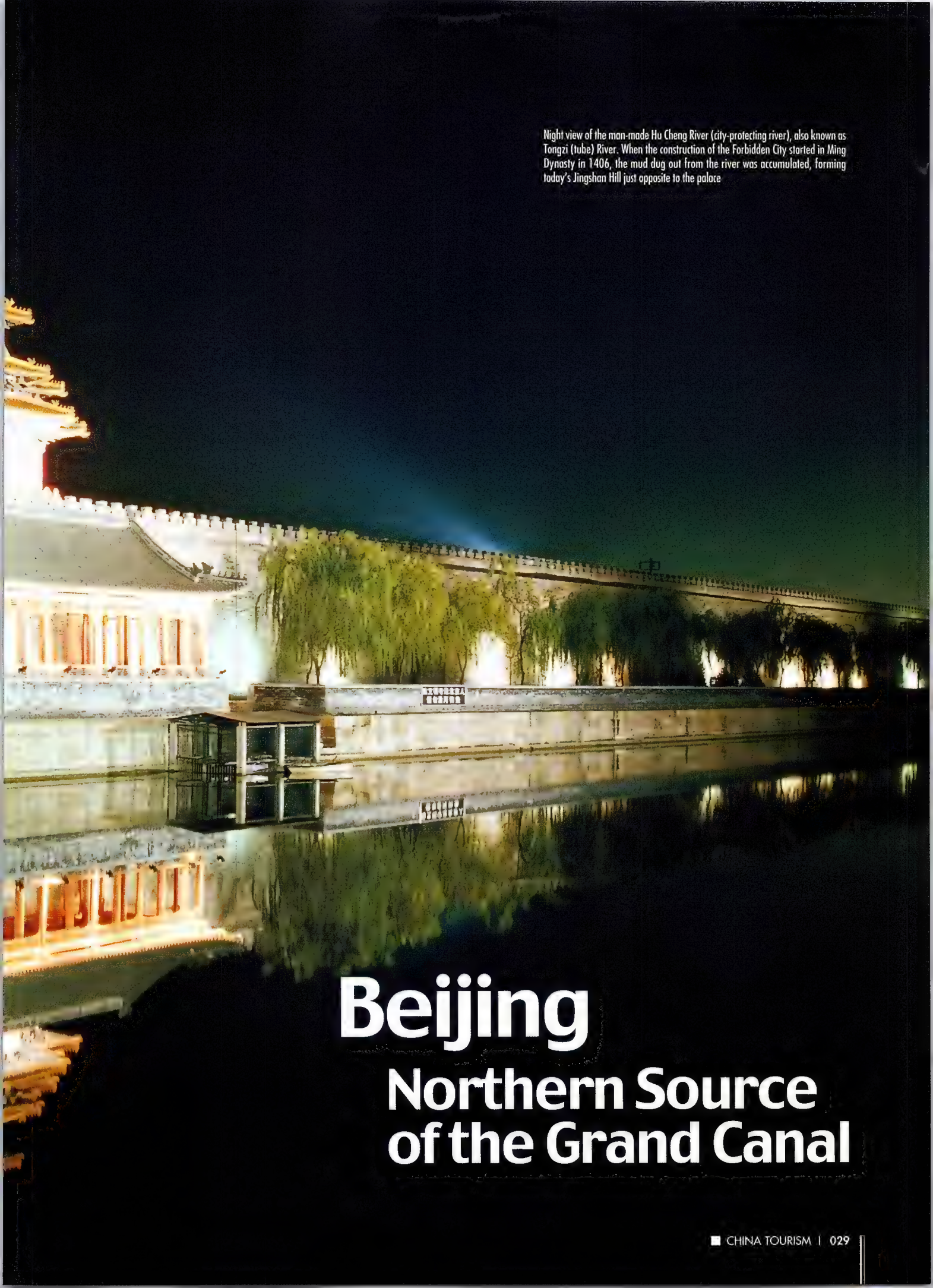
Wendi and Yangdi, the only emperors to rule during the Sui Dynasty (581–618), initiated the grander development of the canal for the purpose of transporting provisions and needed materials from southern areas. Starting from the then-capital of Luoyang (Henan Province), the canal was further expanded to link cities from South to North China, the farthest reaching Zhuozhou (or Zhuoxian) at the southern end of Beijing.

The Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) devoted more than 10 years to the digging of two new canal branches, the Jizhou and Huitong rivers. These waterways successfully linked natural canals and lakes between Tianjin in the north and Jiangsu Province in the south. With their construction, the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal was completed.

Haihe River

Taking in the Chaobai, Yongding, Daqing, Ziya and Weihe rivers flowing west of Beijing as far as Shanxi and Shaanxi provinces, the Haihe (or Guhe) is the largest river system in North China. Stretching some 1,090 km (beginning from the Weihe River), it boasts a drainage area of 264,600 sq km and an annual average flow capacity of 700 cubic metres per second. The Haihe flows east through downtown Tianjin, passing through Dagu Port before pouring into the Bohai Sea. Today, reservoirs and drainage channels lining the Haihe help alleviate flooding caused by the sandy waters of the five feeder streams.



A night photograph of the Hu Cheng River (also known as Tongzi River) in Beijing. The river is in the foreground, reflecting the lights from the city. In the background, the white walls of the Forbidden City are illuminated, with traditional Chinese architecture visible on the left. Weeping willow trees line the riverbank. The sky is dark.

Night view of the man-made Hu Cheng River (city-protecting river), also known as Tongzi (tube) River. When the construction of the Forbidden City started in Ming Dynasty in 1406, the mud dug out from the river was accumulated, forming today's Jingshan Hill just opposite to the palace

Beijing

Northern Source of the Grand Canal

The key to successful canal excavation is finding a reliable water source. Open-minded ruler Kublai Khan (1279–1294), also known as Shizu, the first Mongolian emperor of the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), appointed Guo Shoujing, a Han scientist, to dig the Tonghui River between Beijing and Tianjin. In 1291, Guo discovered a spring 30 km northwest of the capital. This he channelled into Shichahai (or Shishahai) Lake in the city's Western District, and from there shifted it into Zhangjiawan Bay in Tongzhou (about 30 km east of Beijing's Chang'an Avenue), building five locks along the Tonghui River to control the canal water levels. Hence, boats from South China could travel from Tongzhou directly to the Shichahai dock, significantly reducing transport expenses.

From Shichahai to Wanning Bridge

I travelled from the west side of the Di'anmen Gate to Shichahai Lake in Beijing's Western District. The history of Shichahai Lake is as old as the city itself. As a local saying goes, "There was first Shichahai, then Beijing city". Nowadays, the area bustles with western bars and restaurants. It looks like a foreign street in China, or perhaps a Chinese street in another country.

In the early morning, however, the lake preserves its famed tranquillity. As I walked north, I saw the Yindian Bridge dividing the lake in half. In the Yuan Dynasty when Beijing was first designated China's capital city, the lake marked the end of the Grand Canal. Cereals, silks and teas transported from South China were unloaded here.

Water from Shichahai continues east through the extraordinary Wanning Bridge into the Yuhe (Jade) River. Wanning Bridge is located exactly at the northernmost point of Beijing's central axis.

How the Canal Built the Forbidden City

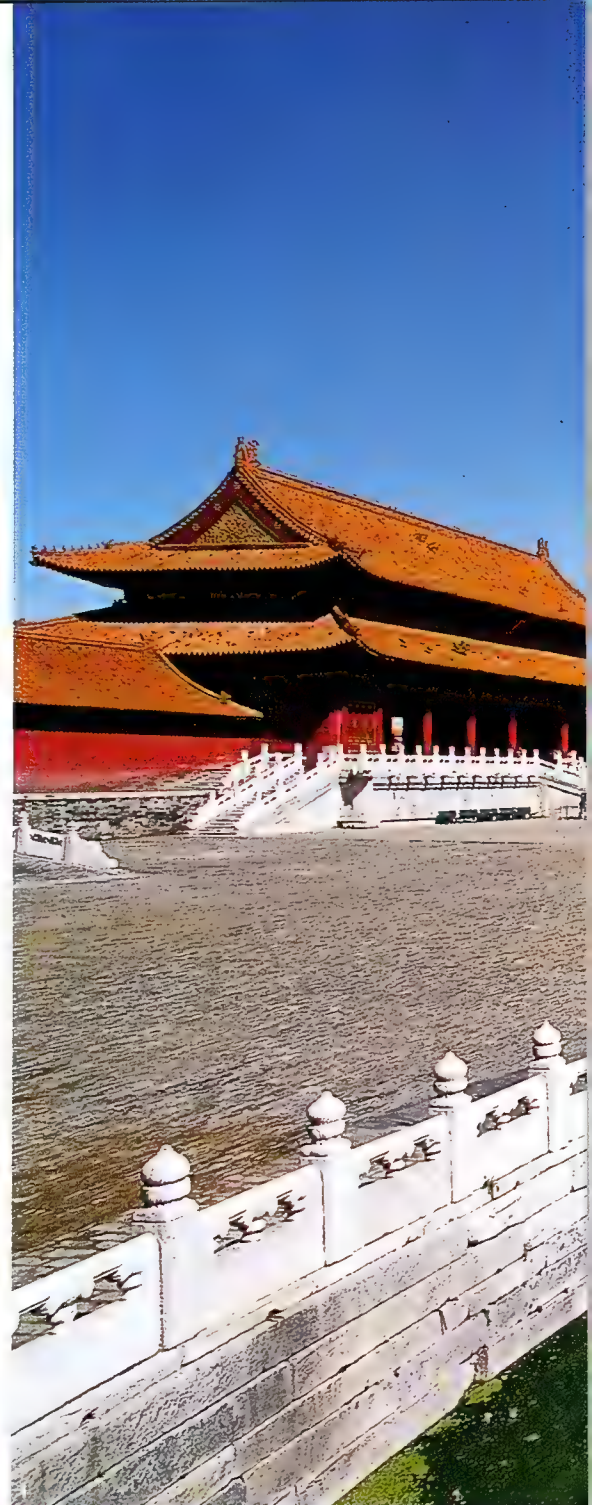
In 1406, Ming emperor Chengzu ordered

1. The Jinshui (Golden Water) River links with the Tongzi River from the northwestern side to the Forbidden City, and flows out in the southeastern side. When there is fire, people can use the river water to put out fire; or during raining season, the river helps out to release exceeding water from the Forbidden City

2. Tongzhou is the starting point of Tonghui River. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, it was the transfer station of the Grand Canal. All grains and materials transported to Beijing were temporarily stored here

3. Dividing the Shishahai Lake into half, Yinding Bridge (Chinese name shown in the photo) was an important port of the Grand Canal in Yuan Dynasty

4. The eldest among its kind in Beijing city, Wanning Bridge sets as the north end of the central axis of Beijing. Below the bridge built with two stone lions whom believed to guard the river





construction of the Forbidden City. He instructed Song Li, one of his important ministers, to collect timber from throughout southern China. Consequently, scores of labourers were sent deep into the mountains to harvest rare wood. In Lingling, on the bank of the Grand Canal in Shandong Province, craftsmen worked day and night making bricks, which were continually transported along the waterway to Beijing to build the palace walls. Meanwhile, the "golden bricks" used to lay the hall floors within the Imperial Palace were made in Suzhou, involving complicated techniques. The bricks were then shipped via the Grand Canal to Tongzhou. As a result, the Forbidden City can be said to have floated down the Grand Canal to Beijing!

End of an Era

Later during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), the canal was blocked by floodwaters from the Yellow River. But as this occurred during the Taiping Rebellion (1851–1864), suppression of which sapped the government of manpower and funds, canal freight was halted in 1901, bringing the illustrious Grand Canal era to an end.

Today a park on the eastern bank of the Tongzhou Grand Canal pays tribute to the old canal culture. Meanwhile, the Beijing section of the monumental South-to-North Water Transfer Project is under way. This part of the project involves an investment of more than 6 billion yuan, the approximate cost of constructing a subway route.



Tianjin

A Waterway Hub

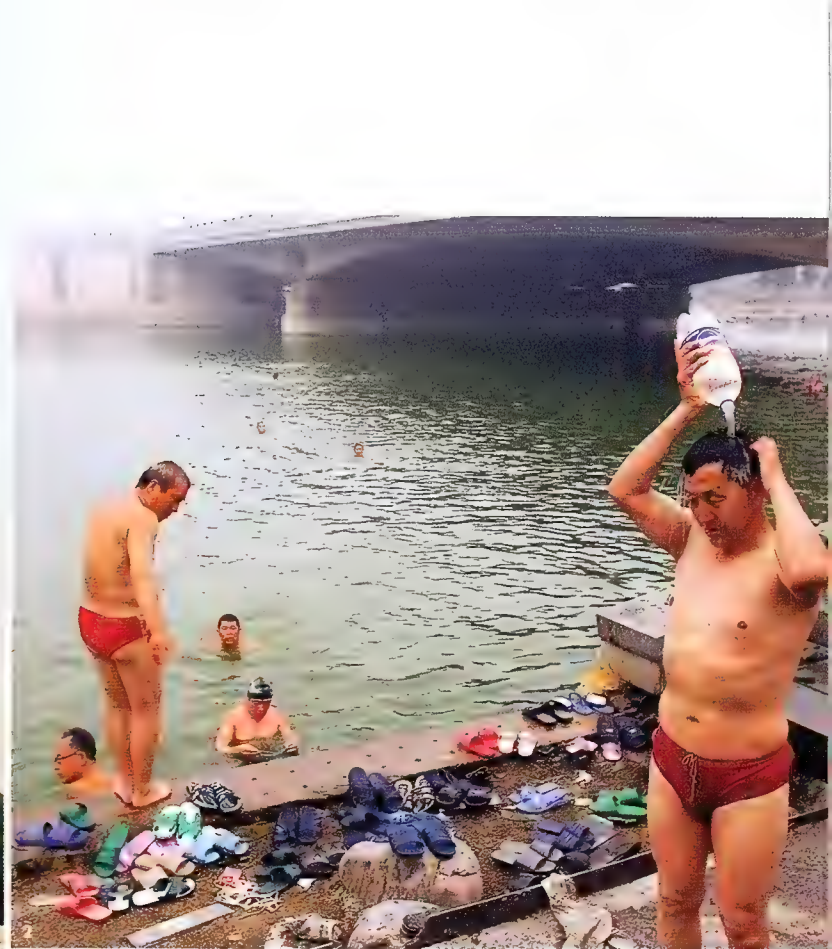
Standing on the Shizilin (Lion Wood) Bridge in downtown Tianjin, I gazed into the distance. The Haihe River flowed slowly, past parks flanking the flagstone-paved banks. At the sound of water sloshing gently from somewhere below, I bent over the parapet and looked down. To my surprise, almost a hundred people were swimming beneath the bridge...

Sanchahe River, Heart of Tianjin

Walking upriver along the Haihe, I reached the mouth of the Sanchahe River, where the North Canal (dividing Tianjin City and Tongxian) and the South Canal (dividing Linqing from Tianjin City) converge.

Commercial buildings, criss-crossing bridges and streets overflowing with automobiles embraced the area.

Sanchahe was the birthplace of Tianjin City. During the Yuan Dynasty, most freight still relied on sea shipping rather than the inadequate North Canal. Foodstuffs were shipped out on the South Canal, reaching Tianjin by way of the Shandong Peninsula. Water flowed in the opposite direction in the North Canal, which measured less than 10 metres wide by one metre deep. Because of its shallowness and narrowness, goods had to be transmitted from sea-going vessels to johnboats at the mouth of the Sanchahe on their way to Beijing.



Tianjin became a military seat (wei cheng) in 1404 during the Ming Dynasty. The office of the prefecture was located on the southwest part of the Sanchahe. Many warehouses were built nearby to facilitate the further transfer and storage of grains. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, more than 10,000 canal vessels greatly boosted trade and business in Tianjin.

Severe Water Shortage

The Tianjinese know the importance of conserving water. The most important water source for the urban area, the Panjiakou Reservoir, barely keeps up with

demand. Especially in summer, the daily water consumption supply is far from enough. The municipal authority once had to ration out water in urban areas and towns, and in the bathrooms of some college dormitories, students receive special electronic cards that provide a fixed amount of water for their bathing needs.

I continued west along the South Canal from the mouth of the Sanchahe and noticed that the once busy waterway has become very shallow in some sections. Wild grasses even occasionally sprout up in the centre of the channel, creating a sad sight.

Translated by Huang Deyuan

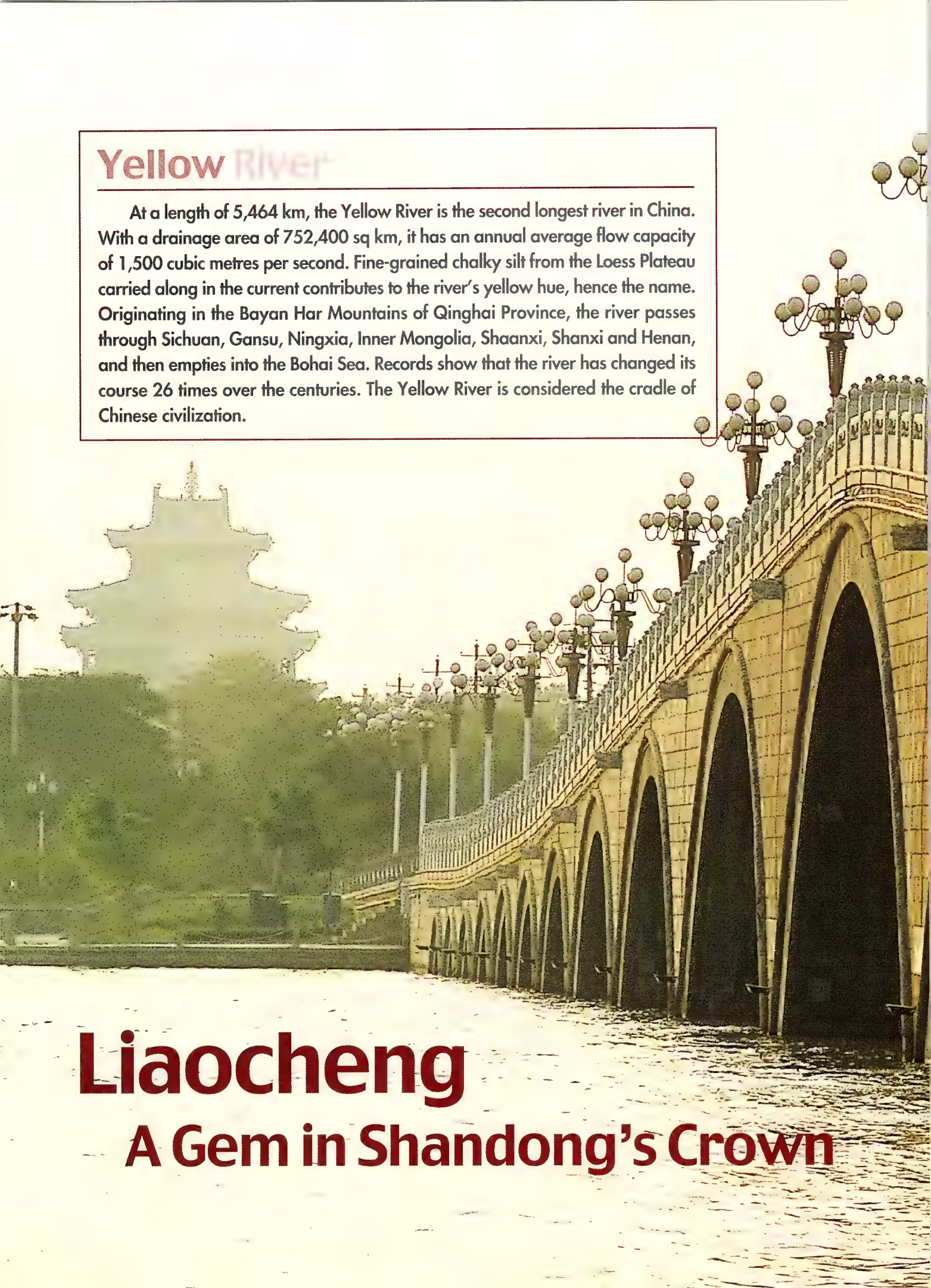
1. The Shizilin (Lion Forest) Bridge which crosses over the Haihe River

2. Tianjin is one of the cities in crisis of drought in China. The locals like swimming in the Haihe River and bath themselves afterwards with clean water

3. Located on the west coast of Haihe River, the Tianjin Ancient Culture Street is a new tourist destination

Yellow River

At a length of 5,464 km, the Yellow River is the second longest river in China. With a drainage area of 752,400 sq km, it has an annual average flow capacity of 1,500 cubic metres per second. Fine-grained chalky silt from the Loess Plateau carried along in the current contributes to the river's yellow hue, hence the name. Originating in the Bayan Har Mountains of Qinghai Province, the river passes through Sichuan, Gansu, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Shanxi and Henan, and then empties into the Bohai Sea. Records show that the river has changed its course 26 times over the centuries. The Yellow River is considered the cradle of Chinese civilization.



Liaocheng

A Gem in Shandong's Crown



Having 17 arches, the aged Xiguan Bridge crosses over the Dongchang Lake

Shandong Province





After passing Linqing city in Shandong Province, where the Lu Yun He (the Shandong Canal between Tai'erzhuang and Linqing) begins, and heading further south, I arrived in Liaocheng. The east route of the South-to-North Water Transfer Project will start here. When mentioning Shandong, places like Qingdao (the beer city), Qufu (Confucius' birthplace), or Taishan Mountain are usually more familiar to tourists. However, Liaocheng also prospered as a rendezvous point for merchants from all over China, and at night the town is no less mesmerizing than larger, sparkling cities after dark.

Guangyue Tower, the Landmark

Liaocheng, known as Dongchang Prefecture in ancient times, benefited greatly from the Grand Canal in past centuries. As a result of the excavation of the Huitong River in the Yuan Dynasty, it became one of nine commercial centres along the Grand Canal, thanks to its unique geographical situation and bustling water transport.

Turning east from Xiguan Street in Liaocheng city proper, we stepped onto a long dyke from where we could observe the Xiguan Bridge. While it resembles the Seventeen-Arch Bridge at the Summer Palace, we

1. The Guangyue Tower built in 1374, together with the Yueyang Tower in Hunan Province and Huanghe (Yellow Crane) Tower in Hubei Province, are known as three greatest ancient towers of China

2. The Shanxi-Shaanxi Guildhall located west of the Grand Canal in Liucheng was established by merchants from Shanxi and Shaanxi provinces in 1743. Zhang Yuexing, a well-known calligraphist in the city, practices Chinese calligraphy every morning in front of the hall

3. The octagonal Buddhist pagoda in Linqing boosting a history of more than 380 years is an unit under the country's protection

noticed the longer, taller Xiguan had more arches. Standing on the bridge, we also saw Guangyue Tower, the tallest building in the city centre.

The tower was built in 1374, during the Ming Dynasty, to defend the city. As the country became more stable, its military function gradually decreased. Together with Yueyang Tower and Huanghe (Yellow Crane) Tower, both in Hunan Province, it is one of the "Three Greatest Ancient Towers in China". Besides writing poems and inscriptions celebrating the tower, Qing Emperor Qianlong also used it as one of his 36 temporary palaces during his travels.

Gathering Place for Guilds

As Liaocheng used to be a major port along the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, goods such as bamboo, timber and cloth from southern China, porcelain from Jiangxi Province, tung oil from Hubei Province, and silk and tea from Zhejiang were transported there, making it the largest distribution centre in western Shandong. Businessmen from all over the country established guildhalls here as gathering places for their members. Of the eight most famous guildhalls built in that period, only the Shan-Shaan Guildhall remains.

The Shan-Shaan (Shanxi and Shaanxi) Guildhall, located at Dongguan west of the Grand Canal, was built during the Yongle reign of the Ming Dynasty (1403-1424). Due to rapidly developing business activities, guildhalls began springing up all over town. By meeting at these halls to offer sacrifices to the gods, play music together, discuss official business and help one another, the townspeople formed lasting bonds. Since a guildhall reflected the image of one's

township, different guilds often competed to show themselves to best effect. The Shanxi and Shaanxi merchants, who formed the strongest business group, constructed a luxurious guildhall.

New Lake from an Old River

In the evening many people sit on stools by Dongchang Lake to cool off, fanning themselves. The water in the lake is crystal clear. I asked a man, "Where does the water come from?" He said it was drawn from the Yellow River, with the silt removed before it entered the lake. Covering an area of five square kilometres, it's almost as large as Hangzhou's West Lake. Dongchang Lake is connected to the Grand Canal; it used to become a pool of stagnant water whenever the canal ran dry in the past. The man also told me that since some of the water was used by the town's power plant, the plant paid for the project. The government has also invested quite a lot of money to improve the scenery around the lake in recent years. When the street lamps light up in the evening, it is even more beautiful than in the daytime.

The planning of the city greatly impressed me. So





many older cities have been torn down or rebuilt in China. The preservation of old Liaocheng shows the wisdom of the city's decision makers. As early as 1958, they had decided to build a new city to the north of the old one. At the same time, they decreed

that any new buildings in the old city could not be taller than Guangyue Tower, so that old Liaocheng is well preserved today. The new section is built round the lake, creating a lovely waterside city in north China.

1. Shandong Province exports large amount of garlic to Korea and Japan, and this is a major income of local farmers
2. Lively sculptures carved on the foot of an iron stupa in Liucheng
3. Liucheng residents like raising birds at leisure time



Jining

Gate to the Southern Canal

Upon leaving Liucheng, I planned to travel south along the Grand Canal to Jining via the floating bridge on the Yellow River. I chose this shortcut thinking I would be able to glimpse a trace of the Grand Canal passing through the Yellow River there. But the bridge had been removed; all I saw was muddy water flowing away like melted chocolate. I later learned that the annual clean-up of the silt from a local reservoir on the upper reaches of the river in Henan Province had transported lots of mud and sand down to Jining and the lower reaches. Thus, the bridge had been temporarily removed to allow for a greater flow of water.

I then made a detour of an additional 100 km to the Yellow River Bridge in search of any evidence of the canal. In Sunlou Township, standing on the south bank of the river, I failed to locate the sluice as shown

on the map. I approached a group of farmers who were cutting grass on the northern slope of the bank. One of them straightened up, pointed down with his sickle to the spot where he stood and said, "The sluice was here, but it was dismantled 20 years ago and an embankment was built. This U-shaped bank used to be the outlet for the Canal." "Where is the Grand Canal now?" asked I. "It ran dry a long time ago." And then with his sickle he pointed again, to the south this time, saying, "The Canal near Lunali Village still has some water."

Canal Replaced by Fish Ponds and Country Roads

I headed towards Lunali Village, about 100 metres south of the bank of the Yellow River, and finally saw some water there. A local elderly man by the surname of Han recalled that about 30 years ago



1. A group of farmers living on northern side of the Yellow River are cutting grasses with sickles

2. About 10 km northward from Jining, the Grand Canal is already severely lack of water and therefore all water transport has been stopped

locks had been built on the river for the passage of ships. But I never found out why the locks were later removed or why the Canal was divided up and turned into contracted fishing ponds for the villagers' use.

Every year as the Yellow River passed through the Loess Plateau, it would accumulate huge amounts of sand and mud that silted up in the riverbed while slow, gentle water flowed along the middle and lower reaches. Over time, the riverbed rose to become higher than ground level on both banks, creating a kind of "hanging river."

During the Yongle reign of the Ming Dynasty, a dam was built on the Huitong River in Nanwang, known as the ridge of the river bottom because of its high terrain. The water was drawn from the Wenhe River to Nanwang and was then divided between the north and south. At that time, 31 locks, the first of their

kind to employ the lift-gate technique, were built along the river to ensure the smooth passage of ships from section to section. This technique is still used in the Three Gorges and Gezhouba water projects. And it was this technique that allowed navigation to resume between Nanwang and Linqing, a distance of 150 km, making it the key water-transport artery along the Grand Canal.

But when I visited Nanwang, the former Grand Canal had become a country road. The local people told me that a new canal was dug during 1950s, leaving the old Canal empty. At the end of the 1980s, villagers built kilns on the dry riverbed and fired bricks made from earth dug from the banks, which were now wheat, maize and sorghum fields. Knowing that the massive water conservation project that had once been the Grand Canal had been replaced by green croplands, I couldn't help feeling disappointed.

Then I went to see the Dongda Mosque, which was built on the west bank of the Canal during the Ming Dynasty. In 1459, a Hui pearl and jewel merchant from the northwest was robbed during a business trip to Jining. The local Hui people bravely came to his aid. In order to thank Allah and repay the kindness of the Hui, he had Dongda Mosque renovated. Qing Emperor Qianlong, during his fifth inspection tour of South China, also approved further

enlargement of the mosque.

Animal designs are rarely used to decorate Islamic buildings, as the practice constitutes idolatry and is forbidden by the religion. Dongda Mosque, however, features pillars with dragon and phoenix motifs, though they stand outside the main hall of the mosque. This seems to reflect acceptance of the local culture by the Muslim faithful.

Everyday Life on the Water

There are four lakes – Nanyang, Dushan, Zhaoyang and Weishan – between Jinling and Jiangsu Province, which are generally known as Nan Si Hu

means of transport; villagers take them to go shopping, to school and so on. The residents make a living through fishing, aquaculture and providing water transport, with the last accounting for 60% of their income. The village has 22 motorboats, each with a transport capability of 8,000~10,000 tons, which operate on the Grand Canal all year long. The cement boats are their homes, with the deck as the balcony, front cabin the bedroom, middle cabin the living room and rear cabin the kitchen.

In my curiosity to see what houseboat living was like, I was warmly welcomed by the matriarch of one such family. Their spotlessly clean boat is equipped with an air



1. For boat workers on the Grand Canal, the boats are their homes

2. A man playing *pipa* in front of a statue built in memory of the Resistance War Against Japan beside Weishan Lake

("four lakes in the South"). The lakes have benefited from the Grand Canal and, especially in recent years, they have avoided running dry due to water drawn to the Canal from the Yellow and Yangtze rivers. Weishan Lake, the largest of the four, is the most famous.

Weihe Village in Gaolou Township at Weishan Lake is a distinctive water town, with a population of just 1,300 and little farmland. Almost all of the village's families live on boats. I took a motorboat to Weihe Village and saw many cement boats berthed along the watercourse, which resembles a busy street with shops, a supermarket, restaurants, a school and a clinic all right on the water. Boats are the only

conditioner in the bedroom and all the other modern appliances. The husband and son were watching TV in the living room, while the wife offered me watermelon chilled in the refrigerator. They cook with petroleum gas. "Cement boats are outdated now; why do you still use one?" I asked. The man said it was cheaper than either a wooden or iron boat and that it would not rust, even if it wasn't painted, so he did not have to worry about maintenance. The only shortcoming was that it could easily sink in a collision. Therefore, the government forbids cement boats from sailing on the river, so they may only be used as docked houses.

Weihe Village is a five-hour boat trip from the





county town and there is no land route service. Early on, the question of how to educate the children was a concern. The first primary school run by the local people was founded on an old fishing boat in 1963 on Weishan Lake. There was only one teacher and it was simply equipped, but the children could at least attend classes. At that time it served about 20 students of varying ages. The boat school would follow the

fishermen around, so its location constantly changed over the course of a year.

After a transport team, which moved from place to place all the time, was formed in the village, it was decided that the boat school would anchor in the residential area of the lake. In July 2003, the Education Department of Weishan County and Weihe Village together invested 300,000 yuan in a



new school boat. At 30 metres long and eight metres wide, the boat has three classrooms, one computer room and one office for the teachers. A total of 44 students are enrolled in three grades. Pupils travel to and from school by their private rowboats. Some younger students are required to wear life vests during the trip to school, while on windy, rainy days, all students must be accompanied by either their parents

or teachers. Although the classrooms on the boat school are not as comfortable as those of schools on land and the playground is fairly small, they enjoy the blue sky above, the broad water beneath and the fresh air without the noise of the city. The sound of them reading aloud in their clear young voices enhances the beauty and serenity of Weishan Lake.

Translated by Wang Zengfen

1. Children on the boats always have to wear life jacket

2. The sound of children reading aloud enhances the beauty and serenity of Weishan Lake

3. In Weihe Village, boats are the only means of transport; villagers take them to go shopping, to school and so on

4. Villagers catching fishes at sunset



Xuzhou

Land of Ancient Battles

A short distance south from Huishan County the traveller enters the Jiangsu city of Xuzhou where the ancient Grand Canal crosses the city in the north. Xuzhou has been an important centre in Chinese history across the centuries. To the north of the city lies Peixian, the hometown of the founding emperor of the Han Dynasty Liu Bang (256–195 B.C.).

During the Eastern and Western Han dynasties, 18 kings of the Chu state and the King of Pengcheng were enthroned at Xuzhou and their graves are located on the outskirts of Xuzhou. Modern archaeologists have uncovered large quantities of Han Dynasty mural paintings, stone statues, terracotta warrior statues and other valuable



artefacts, whose scale, number and quality rank them amongst China's top archaeological finds.

The founding emperor of the Han Dynasty, Liu Bang, arose from humble origins. One of his commanders Fan Kuai (?–189 B.C.) once used to be a dog butcher whose dog meat was so delicious that Fan's fame spread all the way to Liu

Bang's ears. When Liu first met Fan, he was poor and destitute, however he still loved a good meal of dog meat and wine. After Liu became emperor, he continued to eat dog meat and took the practice to Xi'an when he moved there. In many of the Han tombs now found in Xi'an, terracotta statues of pigs, lamb and dogs can be found standing in lines.

Xuzhou is one of the areas in China which Han Dynasty tomb murals and statues are most concentrated



Archaeologists think that these animals were meant to feed the emperor. Even today, virtually every restaurant in Peixian serves dog meat cooked in the traditional style.

The Han Dynasty Terracotta Warriors

Liu Bang founded the Han Dynasty in 206 B.C. and had his hometown of Xuzhou elevated into a tributary state by the name of Chu. Liu first appointed Han Xin (? – 196 B.C.) as the King of Chu. However, Liu was a suspicious person who only trusted his relatives. He later appointed his half-brother Liu Jiao to replace Han Xin. Since then, all the kings of Chu were members of the royal family. After their deaths, they were buried in the hills around Xuzhou. Today, eight tombs have been discovered and the Chu royal tomb cluster has been entered as a key protected site under national protection. In 1995, the Chu tombs at Shizishan (Lion Mountain) were ranked as the most valuable archaeological discovery of the year.

The tomb is the largest Han Dynasty tomb uncovered in Xuzhou so far. Among the most valuable finds in the tomb is the jade burial suit made from over 3,400 jade pieces tied together with gold wire and the best example of such burial suits found in China. In addition, also in the tomb were discovered Han dynasty terracotta warrior figures reflecting the military system used in the Chu

kingdom during the early years of the Western Han Dynasty. Compared to the Qin Dynasty terracotta warriors in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, the Han Dynasty terracotta warriors are much smaller, which look like children's toys.



1. The barge group at the Grand Canal in the Xuzhou division

2. The statue of Xiang Yu (232–202 B.C.), the Hegemon from Western Chu Kingdom

3. According to Xuzhou's tradition, paper horse will be buried with the deceased people

4. Horse statues as funerary objects in the tomb of Liu Zhu, the sixth generation Chu King in Guishan, Shidun County



Rich Tomb Treasures

Located in Xuzhou's Shidun County lies the tomb of Chu king Liu Zhu, sixth generation Chu king, and his wife. The tomb is much larger than other tombs of its type and is divided into three parts: the entrance path, tomb path and tomb chambers. The two 56-metre long tomb paths are one of the most intriguing features of the complex. Even though there are 19 metres between the two tomb paths, the paths are almost identically parallel to each other. Scientists have calculated that the degree of parallelism is so high that were the two paths to continue, they would intersect only after 1,000 km. The consistency in the height and width of the two tomb paths is also remarkably flawless. Scientists have tested for variations in the height and width of the tomb paths with laser beams and found that there is minimal variation. How were the tomb paths constructed with such precision? The answer remains a mystery.

Xuzhou is also one of the areas in which Han dynasty tomb murals and statues are most concentrated. Over 700 stone murals have been excavated and most are now housed in the Xuzhou Stone Mural Art Museum. Along with the Chu tombs and the Han dynasty terracotta warriors, together the stone murals are known as the "three outstanding features" of the Xuzhou Han Dynasty sights. Other sights to see in the area include "Parading the Horse Platform", "The Hegemon King's Tower", "The Sword Forging Stream" and other sights that call to mind the mighty battle scenes of the Han Dynasty.

No wonder people say "If one wants to see the Han culture, one must visit Xuzhou."



The Hegemon King from Western Chu

Any mention of Liu Bang cannot be complete without telling the story of his archrival Xiang Yu (232–202 B.C.), the Hegemon from Western Chu. Xiang Yu was born in a village adjacent to the ancient Yellow River in Suqian city, an area not far from Liu Bang's hometown.

A monument has now been built in Suqian to commemorate Xiang Yu and his life. The monument features a statue of Xiang Yu, exhibition halls and a grove of poplar, plane and Chinese scholar trees of which the scholar tree (huaishu) is said to have been planted by Xiang Yu himself. After so many years of tumultuous history, the tree flourishes, rising with dignity from the ground. Behind the grove lies a pavilion housing a massive statue of Xiang Yu on his magnificent horse while a horse feeding trough stands to the side, said to have been used by Xiang Yu's own horse. A commemorative hall devoted to Xiang Yu's old home lies behind the pavilion.

Xiang Yu and Liu Bang wrestled back and forth for power over many years. At first Xiang Yu had the upper hand, but in 202 B.C. Liu Bang led the Han troops in a surprise attack on Xiang Yu. Xiang Yu retaliated with force and defeated the Han army, however Liu Bang brought in more troops from his tributary states and surrounded Xiang Yu. Just as Xiang Yu's army was running out of supplies and men, Liu Bang's general Han Xin ordered his troops to sing songs from Xiang Yu's hometown. When Xiang Yu heard the songs of his childhood all around him he suddenly felt a great remorse and, knowing the battle was lost, committed suicide at the side of the Wu River (today's Hexian in Anhui Province).

The Dragon King Temple

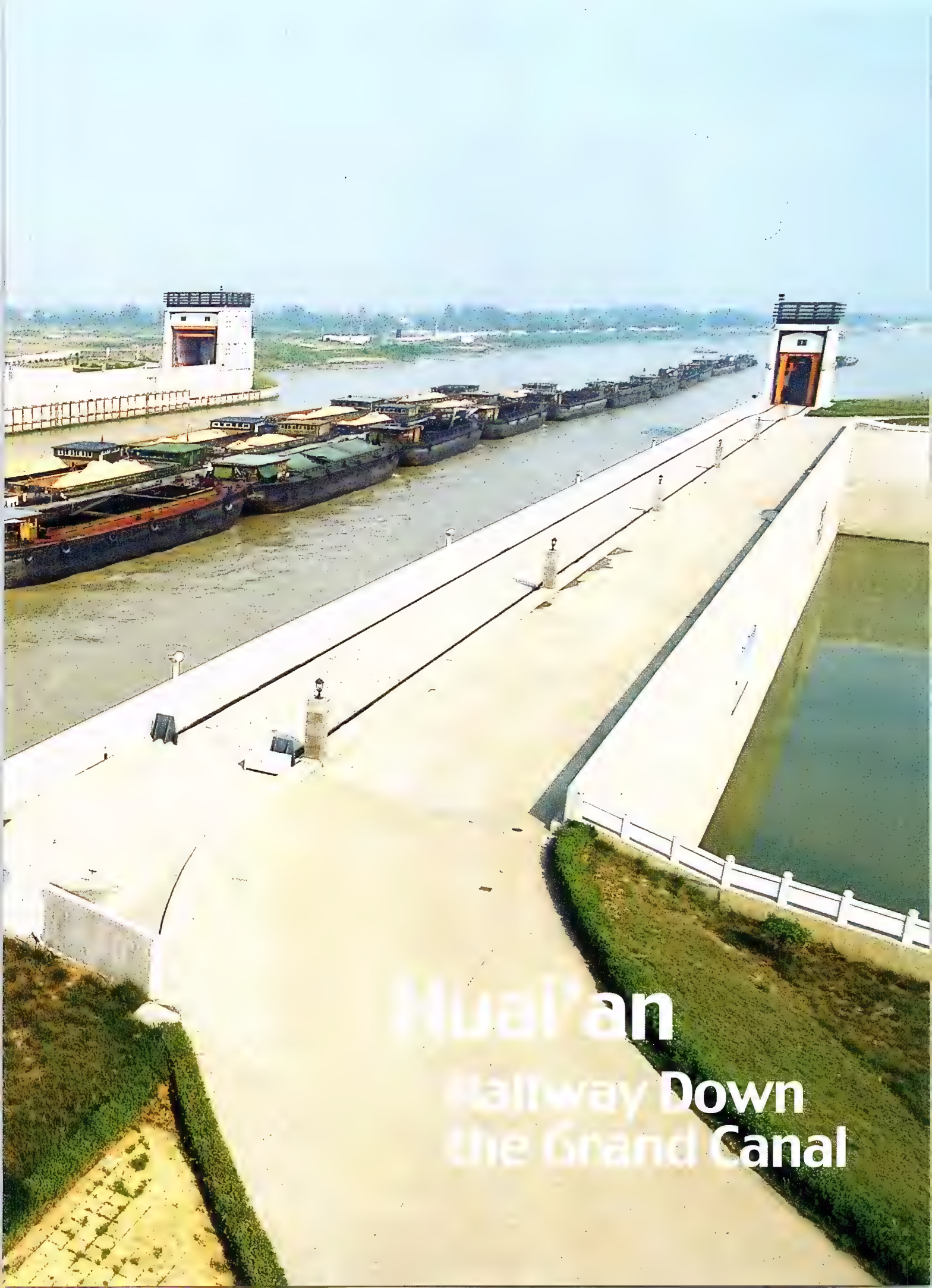
Located 20 km from Suqian city on the banks of the Luoma Lake and next to the Grand Canal lies the Dragon King Temple. First constructed in 1684 to pray to the dragon king to prevent floods, the temple is comprised of nine courtyards spread over 36 *mu* (Chinese hectare). On his six trips to southern China, Emperor Qianlong visited the temple five times and thus the temple is also called "the emperor's travelling palace". One of the few well-preserved traditional building structures in the northern Jiangsu area, the temple managed to survive in excellent condition due to the airy and dry environment in which it is located. After 1949, the temple continued to be upheld by the local government who used it as a grain storehouse, thus preserving it from destruction.

Translated by Bret Sutcliffe

Huaihe

An important river in Central China, the Huaihe River originates in Tongbai Mountain in Henan Province. From here it flows eastward via Anhui and other provinces until it enters Hongze Lake in Jiangsu Province. Nearly 1,000 km in length, the Huaihe's drainage area covers 185,700 sq km. Tributaries include the Honghe, Yinghe, Guohe, Shiguan and Pihe rivers. Since 1949, following the renovation of a reservoir and construction of an irrigation project, the main section of the river, which flows southward from Sanhejian in Gushi County, Henan Province, has been open to navigation.

The Huaihe River is the third water system that the Grand Canal crosses along its path, and is also the largest waterway flyover project in Asia



Hual'an

Halfway Down the Grand Canal



The city of Huai'an lies at the mid-point of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal. Zhenhuai ("Guarding Huaihe River") Tower at the centre of the city symbolizes the Huai'an ("Huaihe River in Peace"). The names of the tower and the city – one tough, the other gentle – contrast pleasantly. Yet the river sometimes runs wild and when it bursts its banks and overruns fields, residents wish the tower really could guard them from the raging floods and bring the water under control. This made me realize how closely the Grand Canal and the Huaihe River that it crosses are connected to the lives of the local people.

Hub of the South-North Waterway

Looking north from the Zhenhuai Tower, I could see the site of the former Grain Transport Director-General's office building. Huai'an was once an important place in the south-to-north grain transport trade. A prefectural commissioner's office for grain transport was set up here in the Sui Dynasty (581–618). In the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127), grain from the south was carried on the Huaihe River to the capital, Kaifeng, via the Bianhe River. When the Southern Song (1127–1279) and the Jin dynasties (1115–1234) were battling each other, the Huaihe River was deemed the boundary, for the Grand Canal meant nothing to the Jin rulers. In the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), the northern part of the Grand Canal was no more than 10 metres wide and just a metre deep, so it could only accommodate boats weighing less than five tons. The royal court once gave up transporting grain on the canal, turning to sea transport instead.

During the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) after Emperor Yongle moved the capital to Beijing, sea transportation was banned, changing the situation drastically. Huai'an became a transport hub on the south-north Grand Canal route as well as a transportation bridge between east and west. Suddenly, thousands of grain boats were passing through Huai'an, sailing north from Mokou onto the

Huaihe River. Boats returning from the north were fully loaded with officially granted salt here. Both grain heading north and salt for the south were distributed here. The Office of the Director-General of Grain Transport was established here by the court in the Ming and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties. The Director-General was also the provincial governor, usually with the high rank of Minister or secondary rank of Vice-Minister of Works, which functioned much as the Ministry of Transportation does today. But as grain transport concerned the economic lifeline of the court, the ministry had greater powers than its modern counterpart. The office complex was large, with some 20,000 civil and military officials and garrison troops responsible for the control of grain transport boats, warehouses, shipyards and arsenals.

From a Bomb Site to a Park

The site of the former Grain Transport offices is now a park. Beyond the entrance gate, old column bases, wall footings and sewer lines are strewn over an area of about 20,000 square metres. In the 1940s, the building was bombed by Japanese warplanes, reducing it to ruins. The local government apparently wanted to restore and even rebuild the offices but had to give up due to lack of funds. Still, it seems more meaningful to preserve the site as it is rather than spend the money and manpower to reconstruct it, as the ruins reveal the historical changes and the rough times the nation has endured far more compellingly than a new structure ever could.

In 1677 (the 16th year of Emperor Kangxi's reign) the office of the Grand Canal's Director-General responsible for the embankment and dredging up of the Yellow River and the Grand Canal was moved from Jining in Shandong Province to Huai'an in Jiangsu. After cracking down on the rebellious rulers of Yunnan, Fujian and Guangdong provinces, Emperor Kangxi made the harnessing of the Yellow River and control of grain transport the focus of court affairs. For



this reason, emperors Kangxi and Qianlong made repeated inspection tours to the south.

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the offices of both the Director-General of the Grand Canal and the Director-General of Grain Transport were located in Huai'an, where prefectural-level officials and government offices large and small abounded. Huai'an's prosperity stemmed from five pillars of industry - the Grand Canal, grain transport, the salt trade, tax collection and transportation.

Famous Names of History

Many important historical figures hail from Huai'an: Han Dynasty general Han Xin, Qing Dynasty national hero Guan Tianpei (1781-1841), Wu Cheng'en (1506-1582, author of the Chinese classic *Journey to the West*), Minister of Rites and Emperor Daoguang's teacher Wang Tingzhen (1757-1827), the great Peking opera master Zhou Xinfang (1895-1975), and of course, most famous of all, the late Premier Zhou Enlai (1898-1976).

Zhou Enlai's former residence is located in Fumaxiang in the Chuzhou District. The 2,000-square metre wood and brick bungalow topped with grey roof tiles is typical of northern Jiangsu residential houses of the Ming and Qing dynasties. The former premier was born in the house on March 5, 1898. Soon after, his father's younger brother, Zhou Yigan, contracted pneumonia. In accordance with the local custom of "averting disaster by inviting happiness", his father had his six-month-old son adopted by his younger brother. A month later, Zhou Yigan passed away and Zhou Enlai was brought up by his widowed aunt.

The young Zhou Enlai was educated at Chen's Garden on the northern bank of the ancient Grand Canal. The mansion belonged to his adoptive mother's ancestors, the Chen family. In the autumn of 1904, six-year-old Zhou Enlai's parents and adoptive mother moved him into his grandfather's mansion - Wangong Hall at Qingjiangpu - where he took lessons at the private school inside the complex. A year later, as the

school was not well run, he followed his birth mother and adoptive mother to live in Chen's garden just south of the mansion and continued his studies there with a private teacher. After his mother died and his family struggled to pay the tutor, he and his younger brother returned to live in his hometown of Fumaxiang. When he was 12, he left Huai'an with his father to study in Tieling in the northeast and never returned.

Zhou Enlai's Memorial Hall is located at Taohuayin in the Chuzhou District. Along the 800-metre axis there is a platform paying homage to the late premier, as well as a main hall, subsidiary halls, a square with a bronze statue and a replica of the West Flower Hall in Zhongnanhai, Beijing (which houses the headquarters of the CPC and the State Council) where all the exhibits are located.

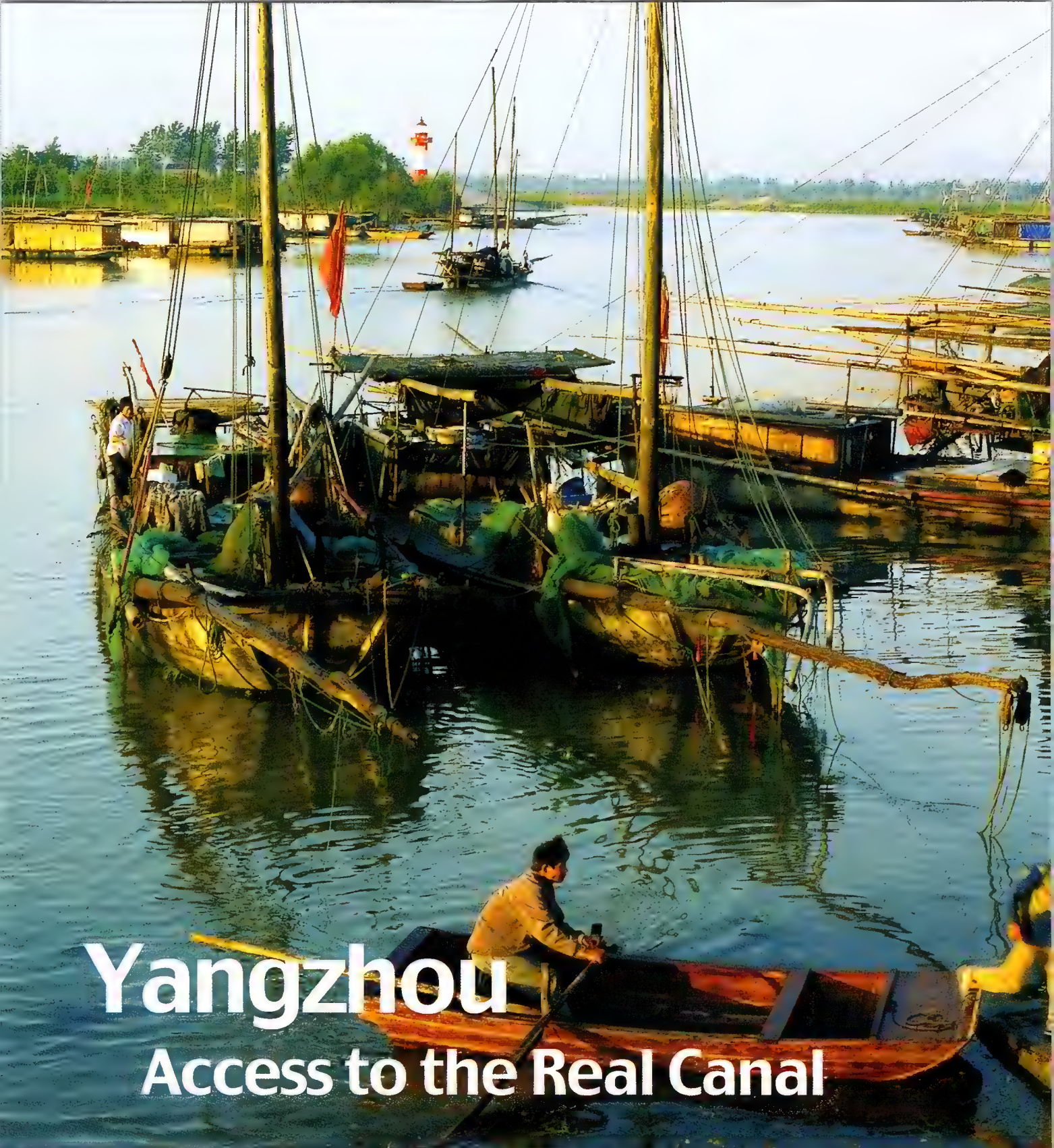
Crossing the Grand Canal

The Huaihe River is the third water system that the Grand Canal crosses along its path. Before leaving Huai'an, I paid a special visit to the water control pivot project that includes the Huaihe River's aqueduct to the sea. After taking the lift up the viewing tower for the largest waterway flyover project in Asia, I could see the huge cross formed by the Grand Canal flowing north to south and the Huaihe River flowing west to east on the Subei (northern Jiangsu) Plain. It looks as if two overhead roads are crossing each other: the light yellow Grand Canal moves slowly, carrying with it a long team of barges, while the light blue Huaihe River flows quietly through the culverts beneath the Grand Canal toward the sea. Each runs its own course without any interruption. Not only does the conduit above replace the lock for the Canal to cross the Huaihe River and ensure the smooth passage of boats to and fro, it is also the only channel on the eastern part of the project that diverts water from the south to the north. The culverts underneath the Canal are the Huaihe River's outlet to the sea, which can help alleviate any unusually large flood that may come once in a hundred years.

1. The Grain Transport offices complex was bombed by Japanese warplanes in 1940s. Now it has become a park

2. Huai'an is the homeland for Han Xin (?-196 B.C.), a famous general of Han Dynasty as well as the Chu King later

3. The old residence of late Premier Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) located at Fuma Lan, Chuzhou District, Huai'an



Yangzhou

Access to the Real Canal

The Grand Canal flows gently south on the vast North Jiangsu Plain. After passing Huai'an, it arrives at Baoying in Jiangsu Province where a pumping station has just been finished for the eastern route of the South-to-North Water Transfer Project.

Gaoyou, China's Largest Ancient Post Office

After Baoying, the Grand Canal continues to Gaoyou and the river widens. Beyond the western bank of this small city lies the vast Gaoyou Lake.

The First Emperor of Qin Dynasty ordered the building of Gaoyou into a city. Mengcheng post-house at Nanmen Gujie (South Gate Ancient Street) near the eastern bank of the river was first constructed in 1346 during the Ming Dynasty. It is the best preserved and the largest ancient post-house in China. Old office materials and fixtures help visitors imagine postal business of the past, the documents that were sent and the fatigue of couriers on urgent errands. Post-houses used to be governed by the Military and



The vast Gaoyou Lake, located on the western bank of Gaoyou city, is just separated from the Grand Canal by an embankment

Chariot Department. Officers in charge of posthouses held the lowest rank. However, the Gaoyou post-house was always fully staffed. Even in the late Qing Dynasty, when the position of post-house officer was no more, the local government installed a level-nine officer here as supervisor. The original Mengcheng post-house was much larger than its present size, with five-room halls at the front and back, plus three storerooms, 14 side rooms and 20 stables. At its peak, 65 horses, 18 post boats and over 200

horsemen and boatmen were stationed here. The house had very strict rules for workers - no wives or concubines, and the weak, the elderly or people of questionable integrity were barred from employment. A courier was entitled to half a kilogram of rice, an equal amount of wheat flour and rice wine per day, plus a bit of cash for other expenses. In winter, they received 2.5 kg of charcoal for heating purposes, a provision that lasted a maximum of three days.

A Voyage through Time

The Grand Canal at Gaoyou is a "hanging river" as the riverbed is higher than the land below its eastern bank. Standing on the bank affords a bird's-eye view of the town's streets and houses. "Boats sail above the roofs and homes are built below the bank" goes a popular local saying. Leaving by the southern gate and turning west, I spotted a small ferry. The passing boats were usually heavily loaded, according to a boatman I met. Most boats were propelled by sail, towrope or punt-pole, but rarely by oars. However, a sail needs wind and a towrope a path, making the punt-pole the most convenient. In the past, thick bamboo poles seven to eight metres long and finished with a sharp-pointed iron end were the preferred option. Two punters would prop the pole firmly against their shoulders as they picked their way along the narrow gunwale from the stem to the stern and back again, pulling the pole behind them, and then placed the iron end firmly in the riverbed to start punting again. So their voyage was actually made on foot! The journey to Beijing from Guazhou south to Yangzhou by the Yangtze usually took 100 days. Most passenger or cargo ships made one trip a year. Some faster passenger ships made two, but that was the most they could do.

During the 1980s, as the countryside became more mechanized, the small outboard single-cylinder diesel engine came into regular use. But as boats increased in size, the little 25-horsepower motors proved far from adequate. A 500-ton boat often had eight outboard engines at its stern, even more impressive than some Hong Kong smuggling boats. Outboard engines were easy to install, but they created serious problems, noise being one. Each time a boat passed by the city, the thunderous roar prompted many complaints. Pollution from oil leakage was another problem, as well as the fact that the engines consumed too much fuel. The Ministry of Communications has stopped licensing boats with outboard motors and has mandated that all boats now being built must be fitted with inboard engines. By 2008, no outboard engines will be in service on the Grand Canal.

Tyranny of Sui Emperor Yangdi

The section from Huai'an to Yangzhou is a vital



1. It was the idea of the First Emperor of Qin Dynasty to establish tall postal towers in this place, which later was being called Gaoyou. In Chinese, "gao" means "tall" and "you" means "postal towers"

2. A couple relax in day-time of their boat home on the Grand Canal



part of the Grand Canal. Over 2,400 years ago, Fuchai, the ruler of the State of Wu, began to dig canals. During the 27 years of the later Sui Dynasty, from 584 (the fourth year of the Kaihuang Period of the Emperor of Wen's rule) to 611 (the sixth year of the Daye period of the Emperor of Yang's reign), canals were successively dug between Xi'an and Tongguan, Huai'an and Yangzhou, Luoyang and Kaifeng, Luoyang and Beijing, and Zhenjiang and Hangzhou. The canals formed a 2,700-km long cobweb that linked the Jiangsu and Anhui areas, the

Central and Hebei plains. From Luoyang, canals radiated west to Guanzhong Basin, north to Hebei Plain and south to Taihu Lake. They connected five major rivers - the Haihe, Yellow, Huaihe, Yangtze and Qiantang - in nine provinces and municipalities - Beijing, Tianjin, Shanxi, Henan, Hebei, Shandong, Anhui, Jiangsu and Zhejiang.

In August 605, the first year of the Daye Period of the Sui Dynasty, shortly after the Tongji and Shanyang canals were finished, the Emperor of Yang sailed down to Yangzhou in his magnificent dragon boat. He arrived in an unbelievable show of extravagance: following him was the Xiangli Boat for the empress, the Niangcai Boat for his concubines and the Qingniao Boat for his palace maids. The fleet totaled 4,700 boats in all stretching more than 100 km along the canal and all were propelled by manpower. Some 500 young women had been press-ganged into pulling the towropes. The emperor visited Yangzhou three times, always escorted by his lavish entourage. His cruelty, tyrannical rule and the incessant wars he waged left the people miserable and angry. In the end, insurgent generals killed him at a palace in Yangzhou. His body was buried at Leitang Village, a northern suburb of the city.

Following the Yangling Highway on south, we came to lower Leitang Village on West Emperor Yang's Road. His fairly small square-shaped tomb



was remodeled once in 1807 in the Qing Dynasty. Except for a stone tablet that bears the inscription, "Mausoleum of the Emperor of Yang, Sui Dynasty", there are no stone carvings, pavilions or stately mausoleum path and no ancient cypress trees, as compared with the magnificent tombs of the First Emperor of Qin and the Emperor of Wu of Han. The Emperor of Yang, legend has it, had first been buried below the Wugong Highland. However, for his numerous evil deeds in life, the heavens punished him in death: wherever he was buried, thunderbolts followed and struck his tomb. In the end, he was moved to this village. As three villages in this area were called Leitang, differentiated only by the words "upper", "middle" and "lower", the heavens gave up smiting him for fear of injuring the innocent. However, at the beginning of this century, after being renovated and opened to visitors, the tomb was again struck by a thunderbolt that damaged a cement pillar in front of the mausoleum. Fortunately, no one was injured by the flying debris. Locals decided it was another of the heavens' attempts to make sure the emperor didn't rest in peace.

The notorious ruler has been the subject of condemnation for a thousand years. According to legend, the emperor had the canal cut just to make a trip to see the unique jade flowers of Yangzhou. But this has proved unfounded, as at the time Yangzhou

had no jade flowers. During a visit to the mausoleum about 10 years ago, just as I raised my camera to take a photo, several boys rushed into the frame, stripped off their pants and began to pee on the stone tablet. At first, I ascribed this act to childish mischief. When asked why they did it, they answered loudly: "Because he was a bad emperor!" Then I asked, "Do you know who ordered the construction of the Grand Canal?" The boys answered in chorus that Emperor Yangdi had done it to see the jade flowers. It seems the emperor will never shake off this unfair accusation.

3. The time-honoured Mengcheng post-house built in Ming Dynasty was much larger than its present size, but is still the largest and best preserved of its kind in China

4. The ducks raised in Gaoyou Lake are famous in producing twin-yolk eggs





In fact, the digging of the Grand Canal is credited with changing history. The immense economic benefits the river created have long been acknowledged.

Yangzhou's Pride and Joy

In terms of transport, Yangzhou is ideally located, for the Grand Canal and the Yangtze meet here. During the Tang Dynasty, its fame drew wealthy merchants and scholars alike. Many famous poets such as Li Bai (701–762), Du Fu (712–770) and Bai Juyi (772–847), all visited Yangzhou. They penned many lines extolling its scenery and prosperity.

The Slender West Lake is the pride of Yangzhou. Originally, there were channels here to drain flood waters into the Grand Canal. In the Qing Dynasty, in preparation for the six inspection tours by emperors Kangxi and Qianlong, well-to-do local merchants and officials purchased lands along the river to build a garden. Lush trees and flowers were planted along a five-kilometre route and impressive buildings were constructed all the way to the distant hills. Today, there is a boat ride that starts from the old imperial ferry. Exquisitely painted pleasure boats follow the same route Emperor Qianlong took. Celestial scenes pass one after another - the Fishing Stand, the Five-pavilion Bridge, the 24 Bridges - creating a truly stunning garden.

The southbound ancient canal left the city near the Lotus Pond. As Yangzhou is very close to the Yangtze, in order to reduce the threat of floods, ancient citizens purposely dug the canal in a Z shape. Pagoda Bend is one corner, with Wenfeng Pagoda towering on its east bank. The octagonal, seven-storey pagoda is a brick-wood construction first built during the Wanli Period of the Ming Dynasty as a landmark for ships. A stone tablet laid beneath the pagoda commemorates the place where Master Jianzhen started his historic

voyage to Japan.

Guazhou: Praised by Poets

On the north bank of the Yangtze, at the south end of the canal at Yangzhou, the ancient Guazhou stream marks the junction for water transportation to seven provinces. In the past it was a gathering place for merchants, scholars and literary men who left behind many immortal works about this place. Because of their writings, Guazhou is also called the "poet ferry" and appears repeatedly in Ming and Qing stories. Here, the well-known Lady Du Shiniang (also known as Madame Butterfly) indignantly sank her jewellery box in the river. Later generations built a pavilion to memorialize this heart-wrenching event, adding a touch of romance to the river.

Further south beyond the Guazhou Sluice is the vast Yangtze. Canal sluices fall into two types: those for navigation and those for flood drainage. Sluices for navigation are usually larger than drainage sluices. The former are administrated by the local navigation administration, while the latter fall under the water conservancy bureau. They charge different fees for their different functions. The drainage Guazhou Sluice charges passing ships by tonnage at 0.7 yuan a ton. A navigation sluice in the Yangzhou charges much less, at only 0.3 yuan per ton. With or without cargo, ships are obliged to pay the fee. If they carry hazardous materials, the fee is much higher.

The newly built Runyang Bridge over the Yangtze greatly reduces the travel time between Yangzhou and Zhenjiang. Still, in my nostalgia, I took a ferryboat across the river.

Crossing the Yangtze, traffic becomes busier on the Grand Canal. Cargo ships shuttle incessantly along this artery of South China.

Translated by Yu Ling



1. Night view of the Yangzhou city
2. Captivating night view of a riverside restaurant in Yangzhou
3. The tomb of Emperor Sui Yangdi has been stuck by thunderbolts for several times, and finally moved to Leitang Village
4. Guazhou is also called the "poet ferry". The ancient Guazhou stream marks the junction for water transportation to seven provinces

Yangtze River

The Changjiang (Long River), also known as the Yangtze, is the longest river in China. Originating from the Tuotuo River in Qinghai Province, its different sections include the Tongtianhe (in Qinghai Province), Jinshajiang (from Dangqu River in Qinghai to Yibin in Sichuan), Chuanjiang (between Yibin in Sichuan Province and Yichang in Hubei Province) and Jingjiang (between Zhicheng in Hubei Province and Chenglingji in Hunan Province). Only the section flowing onward from Yangzhou in Jiangsu Province is formally called the Yangtze. Having passed through Tibet, Sichuan, Yunnan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, Anhui and Jiangsu, the Yangtze enters the East China Sea at the Shanghai coast. Its entire course runs 6,300 km and encompasses a drainage area of 180.71 sq km. Tributaries include the Yarlung, Minjiang, Tuojiang, Jialing, Wujiang, Xiangjiang, Hanjiang, Ganjiang and Huangpujiang rivers.



The Zhenjiang ship lock is connected to the one in Yangzhou on the opposite bank. They are the two most important locks which ferries have to pass before entering the Yangtze River. Two farmers from Zhenjiang are digging fields for seeding in summer.



Zhenjiang

Host to the Hostile
and the Honourable



1. The old residence of Pearl S Buck (1892–1973), an American novelist who had spent half of her lifetimes living in Zhenjiang

2. This white lama pagoda is the only well-kept overhead pagoda based on Lamaism in South China



I boarded the ferry at the ancient route of Guazhou, north of the Yangtze, and sailed along the river to Zhenjiang pier in South China. Alighting from the boat, I darted to the northern slope of Mt Yuntai heading towards the ancient port of Xijin. In the Yuan Dynasty, the Italian traveller Marco Polo (1254–1324) sailed from Guazhou to Xijin.

Ancient Xijin Passage

Walking east down Changjiang Road, I eventually reached Xijin Gudao (Ancient Port) Street. Embraced by green hills, the well-preserved three-metre wide passage, paved with flagstones since the Song and Yuan dynasties, ascends steadily and uniformly uphill. A stone-carved slope in the middle divides the passage in two. In the old days, merchants and travellers went up one way and came down the other, in a very orderly manner. What surprised me the most were the grooves of wheels, reminiscent of a railway track, in the middle of the stony slope. The path opens a door on the past and the chance to glimpse many historic footsteps.

Traditional architecture lines either side of the ancient passage. No one else was around; mine were the only footsteps that echoed in the tranquil silence. Upon passing through an arched doorway, I found myself standing before a white lama pagoda, the only well-kept overhead pagoda based on Lamaism in South China.

Preserved Through Abandonment

During the Qing Dynasty, Xijin Ancient Passage was bustling. Timber stores, grain stores, drapers, pawnshops, teahouses and restaurants were linked

along the corridor. The stores, mostly two-storey brick houses, feature delicately carved vermilion windowpanes. The former British Consulate sits on the east side of Little Pier Street. At the end of the Second Opium War, China was forced to open five trading posts along the Yangtze waterway, Zhenjiang being one of them. In 1864, the British government built its consulate here. A year later, the Yuntai Shan region was turned into a British Concession. On the sixth day of the first lunar month of 1889, a Chinese vendor was reported to have been beaten by British civilians without legitimate cause. The incident ignited the anger of thousands of Zhenjiang citizens who burnt down the consulate. Two years later, under pressure from Britain, the Qing government agreed to compensate the English and rebuild the consulate. The consulate in Zhenjiang is of the East Indian style, consisting of five houses, with the year "1890" carved atop the central building. Meanwhile, Britain had also established customs offices, foreign companies and shops selling imported goods in Zhenjiang. After the late Qing Dynasty, as more railways were built, the town slowly shifted southwards. Xijin Ancient Port was then left alone and thereby preserved.

Pearl S Buck's Bond with Zhenjiang

In 1938, American novelist Pearl S Buck (1892–1973) won the Nobel Prize for Literature for her acclaimed novel, *The Good Earth*. Set in the rural villages of Zhenjiang city and Anhui Province, the book describes the life of a Chinese farmer who becomes a landlord. The author spent half her life in

China and half of that time in Zhenjiang. She was born Pearl Comfort Sydenstricker to a German father and Dutch mother. In 1895, her parents, Southern Presbyterian missionaries, left America with young Pearl and headed back to China, where they had been stationed previously. Travelling via Japan, they stopped first in Shanghai before eventually settling in Zhenjiang.

Pearl understood Chinese at the age of three and attended the church services held in that language. At five, she could recite ad-hoc evangelical speeches to her little playmates. In 1910, having spent her youth in Zhenjiang, she returned to the US to attend university. Four years later, she obtained her bachelor's degree in literature and made her way back to China. In 1917, she married the agricultural economist John Lossing Buck. Shortly after their wedding, they left for Anhui's rural villages to conduct research into farming. This research provided the background for *The Good Earth*. In 1934, the Chinese political scene was plunged into chaos, and Pearl returned to America where she was

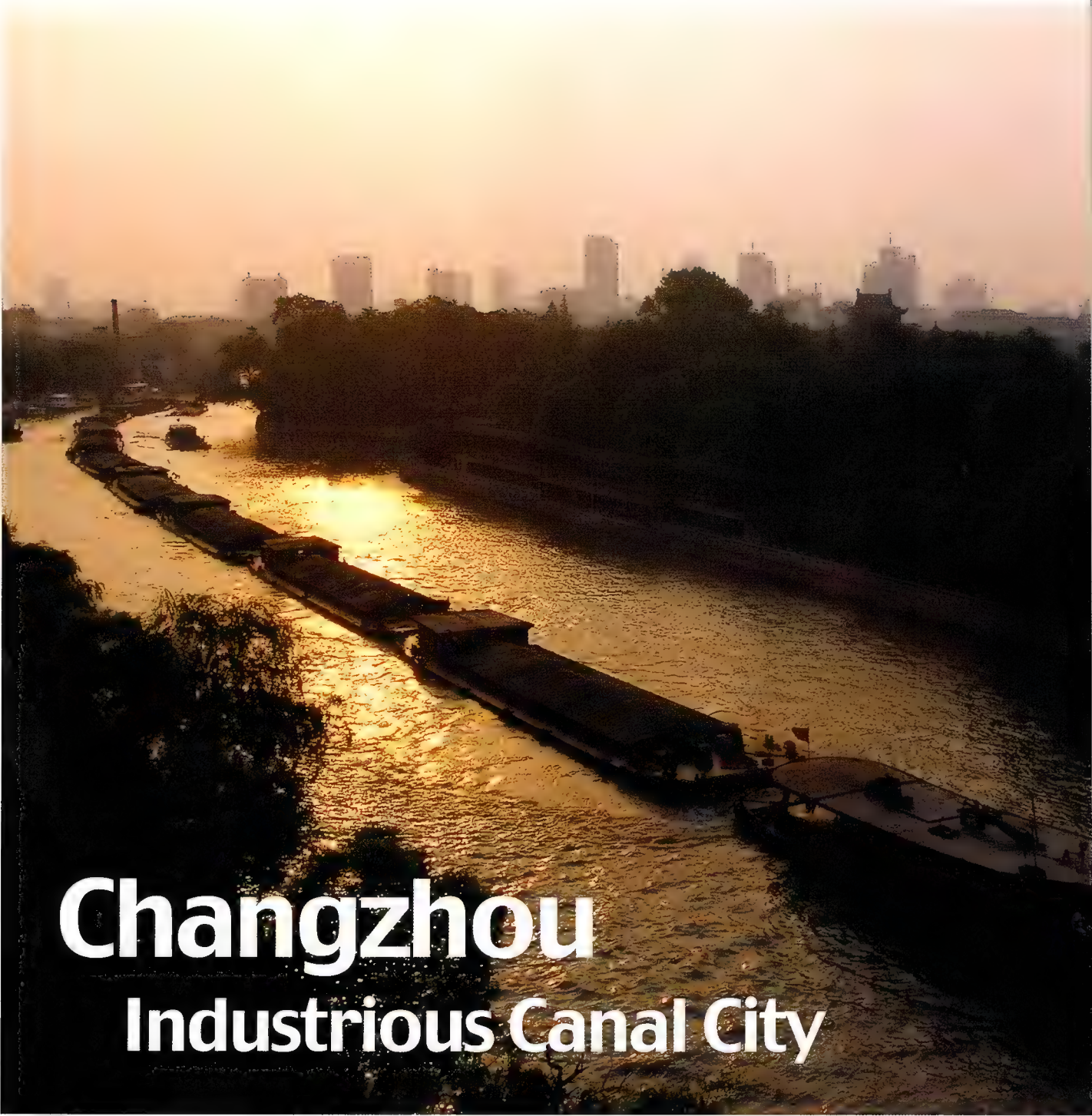
awarded the Nobel Prize four years later. In 1972, former American President Richard Nixon included her on the list for the delegation he intended to take on his official visit to China. She was thrilled at the prospect of returning, as she had long wished to see China once more. Unfortunately, because her novel letter from Peking was thought to carry anti-China sentiment, her application for a visa to accompany the US president was rejected. This saddened her tremendously. China had played a very important part in her life. She deeply regretted the fact that she was never able to return. A year later, she passed away.

Buck's former residence atop Dengyun Hill in Zhenjiang is a villa in the East Indian style. It was here that she embarked on her life as a writer, finishing her first draft of the novel *East Wind, West Wind* in this house. After 1949, the Semi-Conductor Factory Labour Union established its offices there. In 1991, the Chinese and American governments together donated US\$50,000 to renovate the building, which is now open to the public.

3. The grooves of wheels, reminiscent of a railway track, are still seen in the middle of the Xijin Ancient Port Street

4. The British Consulate in Zhenjiang was built in East Indian style



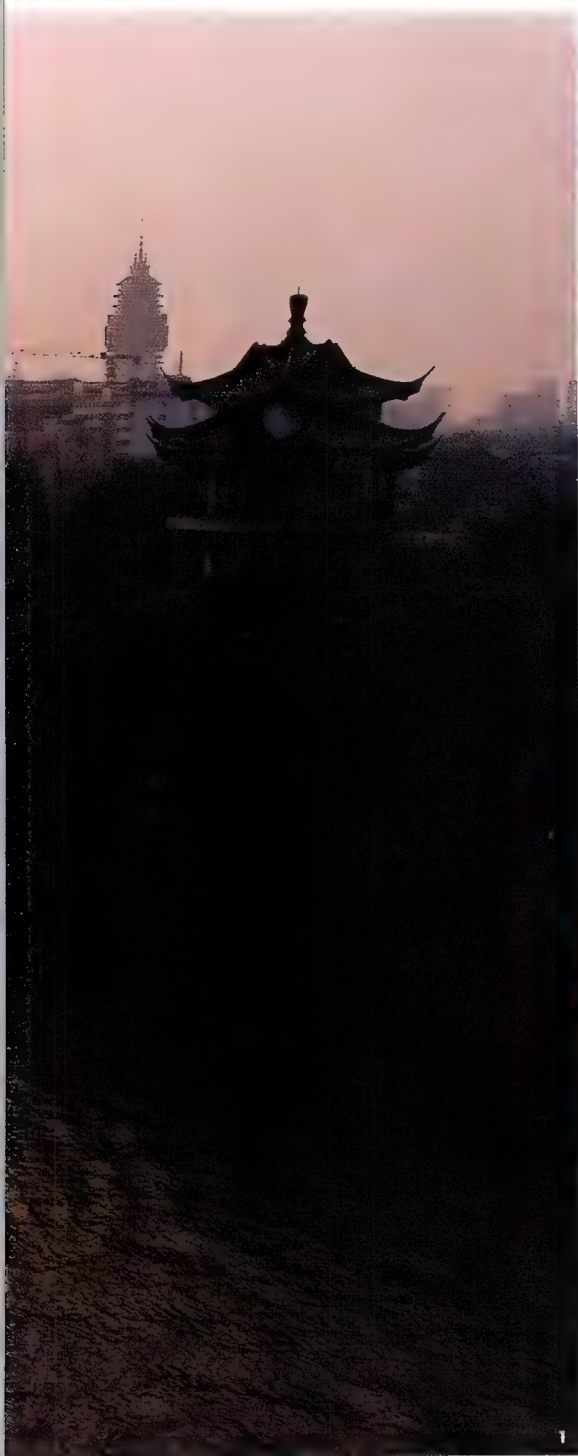


Changzhou

Industrious Canal City

Heading south from Zhenjiang, the Grand Canal eventually meanders through urban Changzhou. The city is famous for its handcrafted wooden combs. Most are made from little leaf boxwood, which is not only tender and fine, but also tensile. The making of a wooden comb comprises 28 steps, and combs are usually made from the wood of such valuable trees as the Chinese Photinia, mahogany, jujube or boxwood. The combs are believed to be therapeutic, not merely taming the hair but massaging the human

head as well. An old saying goes: "Yangzhou has rouges, and Suzhou flowers; but Changzhou's fine-toothed comb is the best." Every July of the lunar calendar during the Qing Dynasty, officials from the Weaving Bureau of Suzhou would travel to Bijie (Fine-Toothed Comb) Alley in Changzhou to place their comb orders. Scores of exquisitely made combs would be ordered for October, the month when combs and six pieces of meticulously embroidered items of clothing for the emperor were given in tribute at the royal palace. Gradually,



needle and thread are used as brush and paint to create different patterns, objects and colour effects through the use of diagonal stitch work. Stitches dance freely in a variety of directions, lengths and thicknesses, often overlapping each other. On close examination, the stitches appear to be in disarray. When viewed from a distance, however, the layers, colours and vivid imagery combine to form a stunning picture. In its way, disordered embroidery is similar to oil painting, making it ideal for portraying people, animals and landscapes.

1. In the summer of 1101, 64-year-old Song poet and essayist Su Dongpo had decided to quit the civil service and make Changzhou his final home. However, suffering from insomnia and exhausted by his journey, Su was dead within a month's time

2. People push their bicycles up the bridge which crosses over the Grand Canal

3. Changzhou is famous for its handcrafted combs made from little leaf boxwood

combs from Changzhou became renowned as the preferred imperial combs.

Order in Disordered Embroidery

Disordered or crisscrossed embroidery (luan zhen xiu, also known in English as "random stitch embroidery") is another well-known folk art of Changzhou. The art form does not employ traditional embroidery skills, which require neat, tight parallel stitches sewn on a cloth surface mounted on a frame. In disordered embroidery,

Love Story Behind Crisscrossed Embroidery

Crisscrossed embroidery, invented by Yang Shouyu (1896–1961), is the result of a moving love story. Yang was a cousin of the famous painter Liu Haisu (1896–1994). Born in the same year, the two were close friends in childhood. The young Liu enjoyed painting, while Yang loved embroidery. Liu's parents even planned for Yang to become their daughter-in-law and consulted a fortune-teller in



secret. But the fortune teller concluded that the marriage would be ill advised. Therefore, at 14, Liu was sent to Shanghai to learn oil painting. An art prodigy, Liu Haisu established the first art school in China at the age of 17. In 1918, he lectured in Beijing and then travelled frequently to Japan, France, Italy and Switzerland to attend different art exhibitions. His fame began to grow and Liu married someone else. But Yang Shouyu still loved her cousin dearly. To console herself, she poured her heart and soul into the study of embroidery and eventually invented the technique of crisscrossed embroidery, which later earned her worldwide acclaim.

A 3,000-year-old Kayak

The remains of Yancheng, currently the most well-preserved and complete ancient city of the



Spring and Autumn Period, lie in the countryside, seven kilometres south of Changzhou. Yancheng has a very special layout composed of three rings of earthen walls and moats, namely, the core, interior and exterior rings. The outermost ring is surrounded by city walls 0.6 square metres thick. Ancient peoples made use of the abundant water resources in South China to skilfully turn three rivers into three moats. The water in the moats stays clear and frost-free throughout the year. The moats and city walls became strong defences for the tribes living inside the city. Invaluable artefacts have been excavated at Yancheng, including hard ceramics decorated with geometric patterns and bronze ware. The most amazing discovery has been that of



a kayak made from the whole trunk of a nanmu and cypress carved by heated axes. The kayak, which dates back some 3,000 years, is the oldest known on earth. It is also proof that ancient peoples had more sophisticated boat-making skills than previously thought. In 2003, the government initiated the conservation and excavation of Yancheng. Since then, a forest park has been planted outside the city, while a recreated ancient plaza and a cultural promenade have been built at the entrance.

Su Dongpo's Final Resting Place

In the summer of 1101, 64-year-old Song poet and essayist Su Dongpo (or Su Shi, 1036–1101)

ended his exile on Hainan Island and brought his family home. They passed through the Yangtze via the river canal and hurried to Changzhou. It was the eleventh and last trip the revered writer, painter and calligrapher would ever make there. He had decided to quit the civil service and make Changzhou his final home. As news of his return spread, the residents of Changzhou crowded in along the canal to welcome their old friend back. Sadly, shortly after arriving in Changzhou, Su, suffering from insomnia and exhausted by his journey, was dead within a month's time. To commemorate Su Dongpo, the people of the region built a pavilion where Su's boat had berthed.

Translated by Dora Tsang

1. On close examination, the stitches of Chanzhou's disordered embroidery appear to be in disarray. However, when viewed from a distance, the layers, colours and vivid imagery combine to form a stunning picture

2. The ruins of Yancheng is the most well-preserved and complete ancient city of the Spring & Autumn Period

Wuxi

Rivertown of Memory



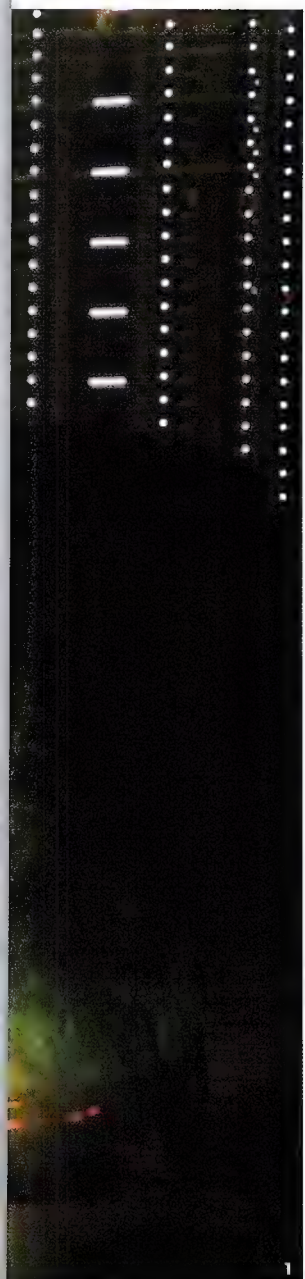
1. Charming night view of the Grand Canal in Wuxi

2. The busy water transport on the Grand Canal in Wuxi

3. A ferry crossing in the city

4. The Donglin Academy was built in 1111 in the Northern Song Dynasty and was a then important place of teaching Neo-Confucian philosophy





As the sun sets and the city lights flicker in the waves, a calm quiet spreads across the Grand Canal and tranquility comes to this 220 square metres islet perched on this major waterway linking Wuxi with Northern China.

In 1278, defeated Song Dynasty General Wen Tianxiang (1236–1283) was being transported to the new victorious capital in Beijing when his boat stopped at Wuxi's Huangbu Point. Full of lament, Wen wrote a poem in which he expressed the bitter taste of failed heroism. For only 18 years earlier, a young 20 years old Wen had passed through this same spot on his way to the imperial examinations, full of hopes for a glorious future. In 1983, the Wuxi government erected a plaque to Wen on this site on which his poems are inscribed describing the poignant moment of melancholy and hope. The plaque stands here today for visitors to reflect on as they stare into the waters of the Grand Canal.

Controversial Donglin Academy

Of the 40 km along which the Grand Canal passes through Wuxi the most interesting part is east of Huangbu Point where the Donglin Academy, Nanchan Temple and ancient canal scenery are located. The Donglin Academy was built in 1111 in the Northern Song Dynasty and was a then important place of teaching Neo-Confucian philosophy. Over a century later in the Yuan Dynasty the site was known as Donglin Nunnery and the name stayed with the site until 1604 when local literati paid for the reconstruction of the Academy and began lecturing here. Because much of the content of their lectures contained harsh criticism of the royal court, the lecturers were persecuted and the academy was destroyed. In 1981 the academy was restored to its former condition and has become a symbol of the moral uprightness and mission of Chinese intellectuals over the centuries.

The Nanchan Zen Temple was built in the era of Liang Wudi (464–549) and the surrounding area is the liveliest place in Wuxi. Apart from a 300-metre eatery street, here there is also a busy market selling everything from flowers and pets to old stamps and antiques.

Across the bridge south from the temple lie rows of traditional style houses crowded on top of the ancient canals. With their grey roof tiles and whitewashed walls, the houses form a picturesque view as they retreat into the distance. In the daytime laundry is strung out to dry, in the evening lights from the houses bounce off the rippling water. This is a wonderful sight of traditional rivertown living.

Outside the former southern city gate lies Qingming Bridge built in the Ming dynasty from funds donated by a wealthy Wuxi family. Constructed from stone foundations, the bridge is Wuxi's only remaining stone bridge from the Ming dynasty.

Moonlight Reflected in the Second Spring

Second Best Spring Under Heaven is the name given to Huishan Spring located on the east hill of Wuxi's Huishan Mountain. The unusual name is the subject of a legend dating back to the Tangy dynasty when tea connoisseur Lu Yu stopped by Wuxi and tasted the spring waters. Lu then pronounced the spring the Second Best Spring in the world for tea drinking and the name has been with the place from then on. In the Tang Dynasty, the Wuxi poet Lu Shenjiang took a sample of the spring water to the capital in Xi'an causing Prime Minister Li Deyu to order more water to be sent from Wuxi. In the 1940s the famous Chinese folk ballad 'Moonlight Reflected in the Second Spring' was composed here by blind musician A Bing. The ballad's touching melody has won it a firm place in Chinese folk music and now the ballad can be found on many compilations of famous Chinese musical pieces.





Suzhou

Night Moor at Maple Bridge

Shantang Street in the morning is busy with local people preparing for the day ahead. The most crowded section is at Star Bridge (Xing Qiao) due to the narrow width of the bridge. In the old days the bridge was said to only accommodate the width of a sedan chair. From the back of the bridge, traditional riverside houses can be seen lined up on the banks of the river that leads to the famous leaning pagoda at Tiger Hill (Hu Qiu).

Traditional life on Shantang Street

The busy market on the north bank of Star

morning or at dusk. Shantang Street in the morning is busy with local people preparing for the day ahead. The most crowded section is at Star Bridge (Xing Qiao) due to the narrow width of the bridge. In the old days the bridge was said to only accommodate the width of a sedan chair. From the back of the bridge, traditional riverside houses can be seen lined up on the banks of the river that leads to the famous leaning pagoda at Tiger Hill (Hu Qiu).

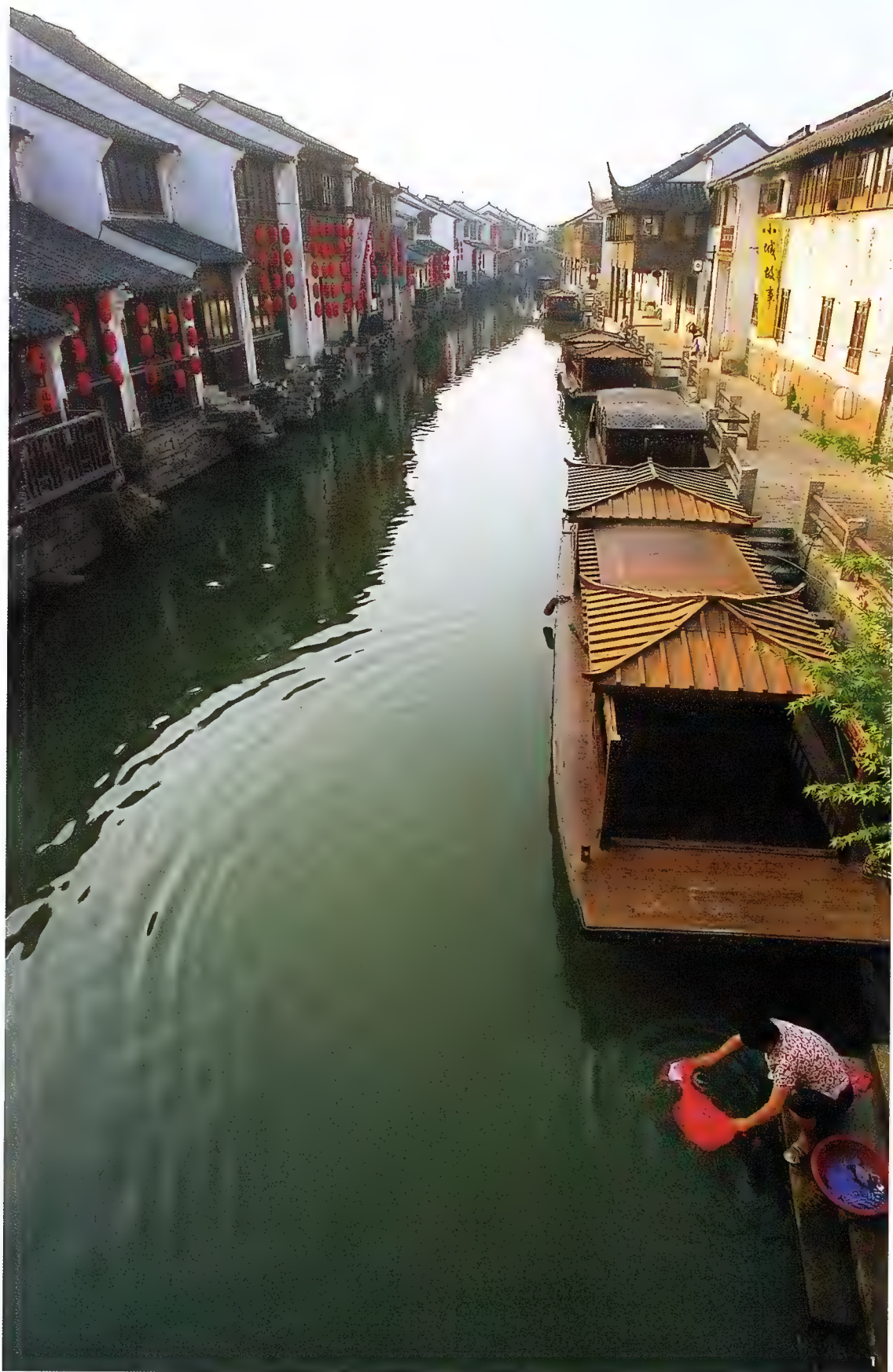
The marketable market on the north bank of Star



Bridge is busiest in the morning when the farmers bring their produce to market by boat. Here you can find fresh vegetables, live fish, and plump ducks and chickens. All around can be heard buyers and sellers chatting in the soft local Suzhou dialect. So soft is the Suzhou dialect that no matter how harsh the words being spoken, to a stranger it sounds as if part of a song performance.

On the southern side of the bridge lies Rongyang Noodle Shop, famous for its fine

noodles cooked slowly for hours but never becoming sticky or gluey. At this restaurant a bowl of noodles is served with various kinds of toppings to the taste of the diner: fish, stewed pork, pork cutlet, eel, prawns, duck, pickled vegetables and pork slices or mushrooms are just some of the toppings available. Another type of noodle dish is called "Crossing the Bridge Noodle" (Guo Qiao Mian) in which crab, prawn, and eel strips are served up in a small bowl with the noodles. The



Previous page:
The construction of Shantang River was an idea of Bai Juyi (772–846), a famous scholar as well as poet of the Tang Dynasty, during his station as Prefect of Suzhou from 825–827. To this date, the Shantang Street along the river still preserves the real taste of Suzhou's water town

1. Instead of using washing machine, residents in Shantang Street use to wash their clothes with the river water
2. A small market at Shantang Street
3. The Baodai (Treasure Belt) Bridge with 52 pillars is the oldest and largest of its kind surviving in China today

most popular toppings for noodles in Suzhou are fried fish pieces and mouth-watering chunks of pork stewed in soy sauce, salt and rice wine. At over a hundred years old, the Rongyang Noodle Shop, like its dishes, has stood the test of time.

Renowned Maple Bridge and Hanshan Temple

Located in the old town of Maple Bridge, Hanshan Temple was built during the Southern Dynasty (420-589). The temple received its name when the High Priest Hanshan moved to the temple in the Tang dynasty. But Hanshan Temple's real fame lies with the Tang dynasty poet Zhang Ji's "Night Moor at Maple Bridge". One thousand years ago, Zhang Ji moored his boat by the Maple Bridge in a melancholy state of mind. Before him the bridge and trees on the bank appeared and vanished in the mist. Only the light from a nearby fishing boat cast out rays of warmth. Just at this moment, the low sound of the heavy temple bell rang out, reverberating endlessly. Following his brooding thoughts Zhang put pen to paper: "At Hanshan Temple outside the ancient Suzhou city walls, the echo from the midnight bell reaches my visiting boat."

For over a thousand years, Hanshan Temple has received countless visitors thanks to these immortal lines and on the last day of the year local residents gather here to listening to the 108 tolls of the temple bell ringing in the New Year.

Arching like a crescent moon over the Grand Canal, Maple Bridge is a short distance from Hanshan Temple and Jiangcun Bridge. Maple Bridge was built in the Tang dynasty as an important land and river transport node. When the grain from the south reached here on its way to the north, the river was blocked off to other boats thus the bridge was called "Sealed Bridge" (Feng Qiao). Later the name changed to Maple Bridge (Feng Qiao) as in Chinese the two names have the same pronunciation.

Fifty Three Moons in the Water

Looking out from the highest bridge over the Grand Canal, the canal water meanders from afar then passes under the Xiang Qian city gate before entering the ancient city. Canals criss-cross Suzhou, but no-one can really say how many bridges there are in Suzhou. One of Suzhou's most interesting bridges, Baodai (Treasure Belt) Bridge is located outside Fengmen Gate and straddles Tantai Lake. The name of the bridge comes from the Tang Dynasty Suzhou governor Wang Zhongshu who loosened the strings of his own "Treasure Belt" (Baodai) to pay for the bridge's construction. Baodai Bridge is a flat bridge constructed not from beams but from 52 bridge pillars

and is China's oldest and largest bridge built on pillars still surviving today. Every year on the 18th day of the 8th lunar month many Suzhou residents gather at Baodai Bridge to view the moon reflected through holes in the 52 bridge pillars, making 53 moons appear in the river below. Like a string of pearls made from the bright moon, the scenery is unique and breathtaking.

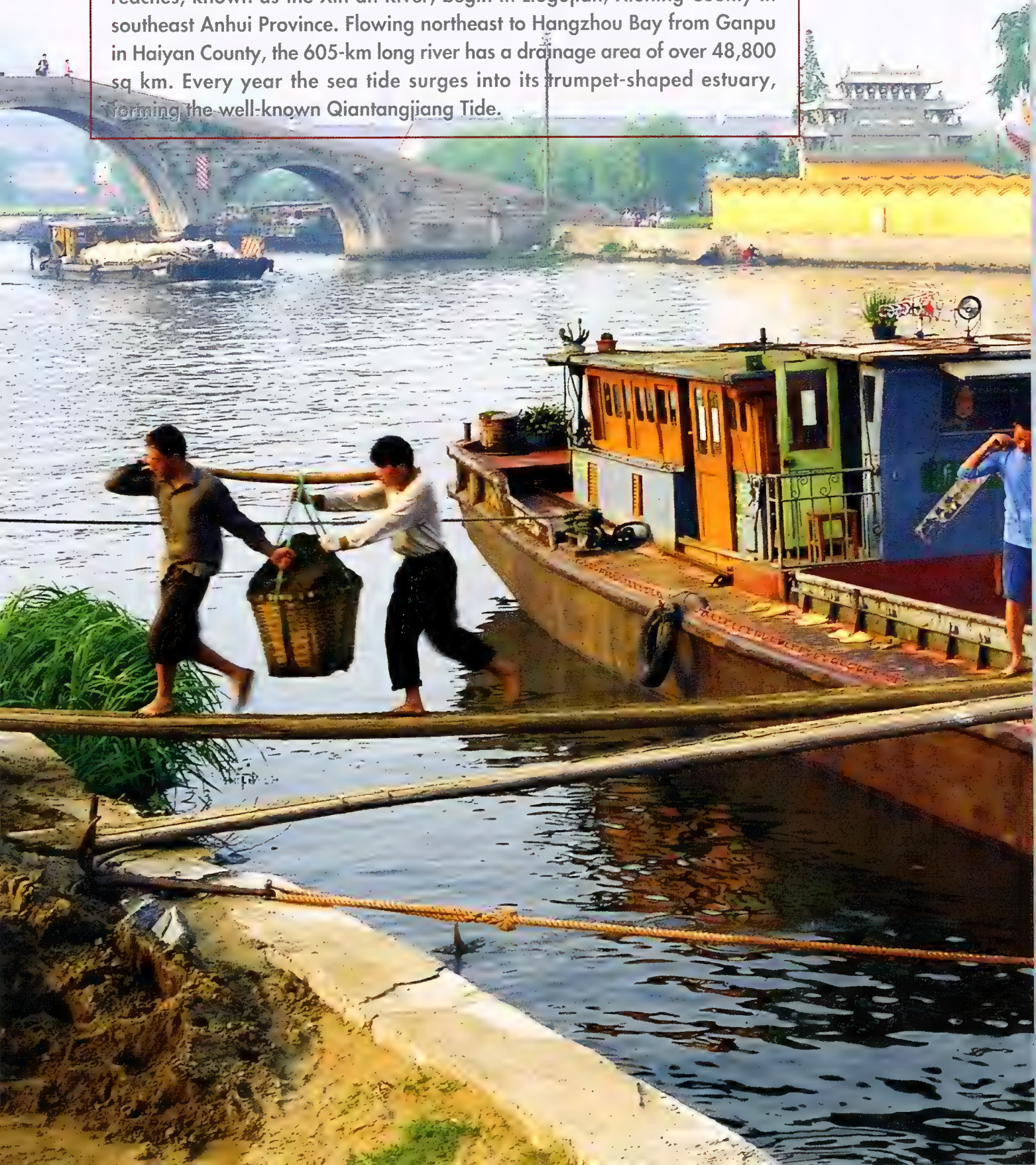
Cargo ships still ply the Grand Canal between Hangzhou and Beijing, and one passenger ship remains to ferry passengers between Suzhou and Hangzhou. The "Heaven" sets sail every night from the Suzhou South Gate wharf and arrives in Hangzhou the next morning with return service the following night. Every day the "Heaven" passes under the Baodai Bridge which has become a gateway symbol for Suzhou to tourists. And in return, the Baodai Bridge watches over the ships passing through underneath, from ships carrying grain to the northern provinces centuries ago to the ships transporting coal to the booming southern cities today.

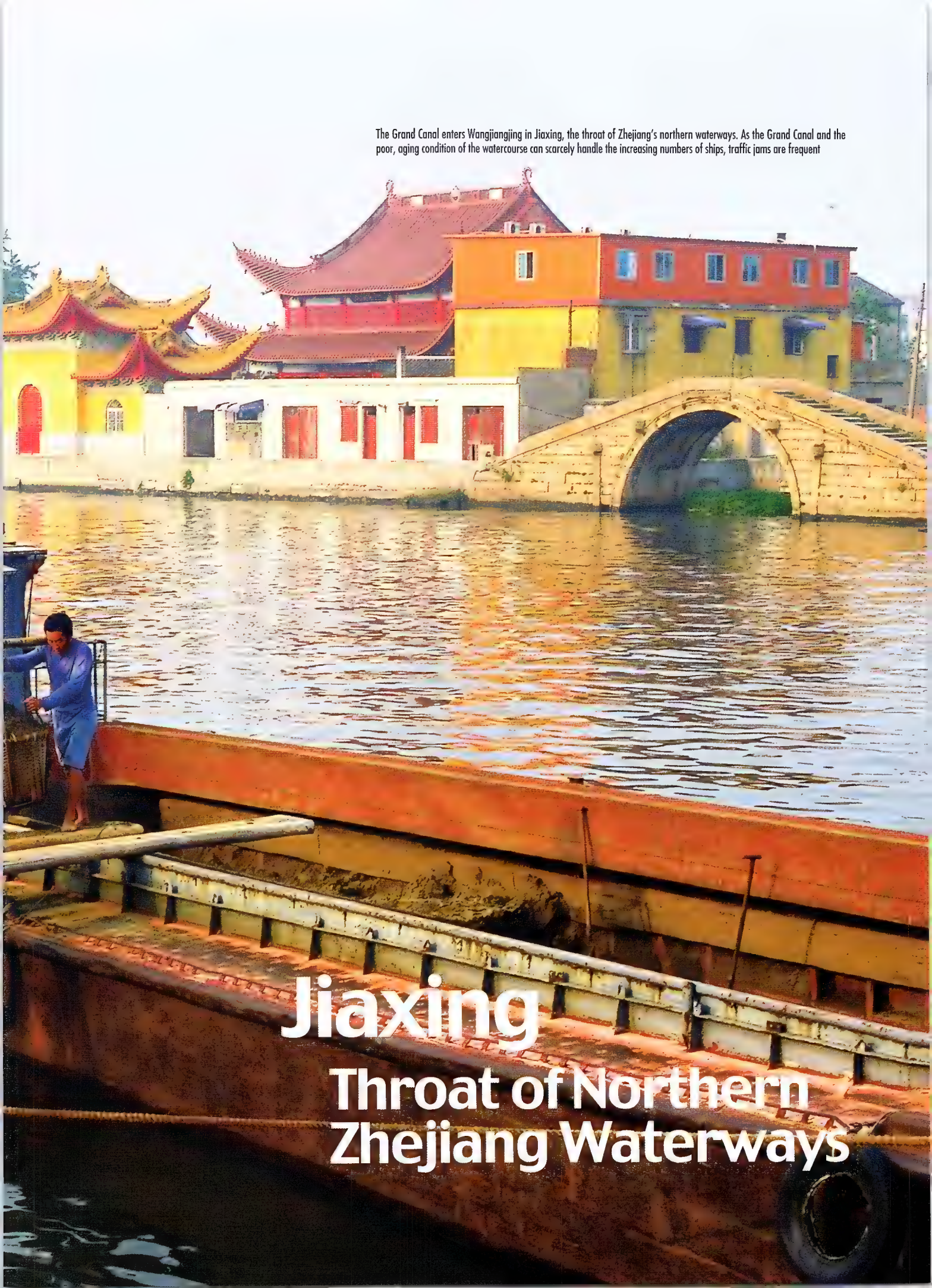
Translated by Bret Sutcliffe



Qiantangjiang

The Qiantangjiang is the largest river in Zhejiang Province. Its upper reaches, known as the Xin'an River, begin in Liugujiang, Xiuning County in southeast Anhui Province. Flowing northeast to Hangzhou Bay from Ganpu in Haiyan County, the 605-km long river has a drainage area of over 48,800 sq km. Every year the sea tide surges into its trumpet-shaped estuary, forming the well-known Qiantangjiang Tide.





The Grand Canal enters Wangjiangjing in Jiaxing, the throat of Zhejiang's northern waterways. As the Grand Canal and the poor, aging condition of the watercourse can scarcely handle the increasing numbers of ships, traffic jams are frequent

Jiaxing

Throat of Northern Zhejiang Waterways

The Grand Canal enters Wangjiang River in Jiaxing, Zhejiang from Shengze in Jiangsu Province. The vast Hangjia Lake Plain stretching out around it is covered by a dense network of waterways amid patches of rice fields. The mulberry trees beyond the paddies fields are a reminder that this is not only a land of fish and rice, but also of silk.

Short though it is, running just 17.35 km, the Jiaxing section of the Grand Canal is the throat of Zhejiang's northern waterways. Located down south at the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, Jiaxing is a main transport artery, with a 300-km, grade-five inland channel along which ores, building materials, coal, iron, steel, grain and petroleum are shipped daily. Ninety percent of the building materials, 85% of the coal and 80% of the petroleum passing through are transported via this inland waterway, while especially heavy freight mainly travels along the watercourse. In 2004, the volume of Jiaxing's water freight transportation and circular flow

lanes in the next five years. The entire section will be upgraded to third-grade watercourse standards, enhancing its passage capacity by 40%, from 500-ton ships to 1,000-ton ones, bringing the annual volume of freight transport to 600 million tons.

Tale of Two Landmarks

Running through Jiaxing city proper, the Grand Canal connects Suzhou to the north and Hangzhou to the south. Jiaxing has two landmarks that boatmen working on the canal can identify - the Three Pagodas and the Luofan Pavilion. On seeing the pagodas, sailors on boats from Hangzhou would cry: "There is Jiaxing Prefecture!" The 17-metre tall pagodas were built in the Tang Dynasty. As the Grand Canal makes an abrupt 90 degree turn here, boats were often capsized. In the belief that river monsters were turning the boats over, the people built the pagodas to try to pacify them.

During a building materials shortage in the



accounted for 70% and 80%, respectively, of the city's total volume for each.

Busy Waterways, Frequent Delays

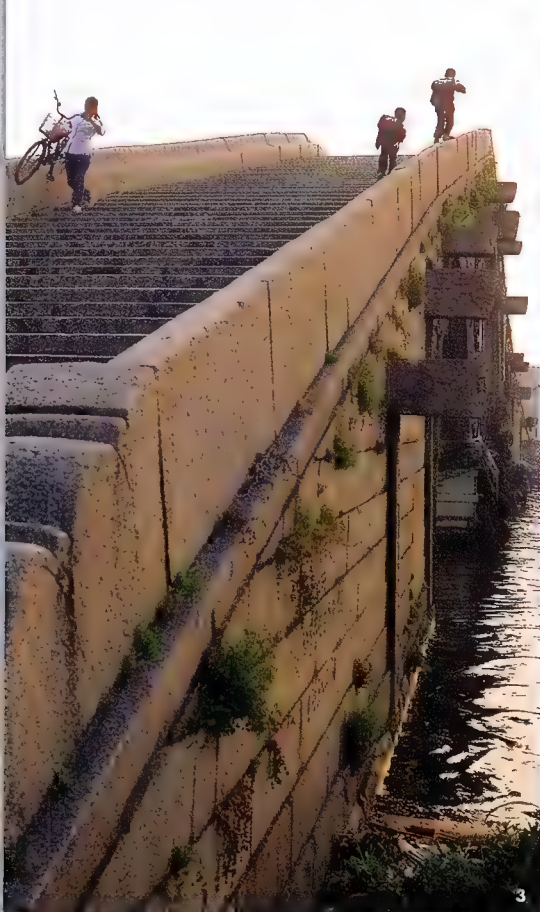
Water transport in Jiaxing faces new challenges posed by the country's rapid economic development. As the Grand Canal and the poor, aging condition of the watercourse can scarcely handle the increasing numbers of ships, traffic jams are frequent. In 2004, the canal endured 10 such jams that lasted more than eight hours each and involved 11,000 ships, resulting in economic losses of over 200 million yuan. Each lengthy delay raises the price of building stone in the markets of Shanghai and southern Jiangsu by five to eight yuan per ton. Zhejiang's power plants also report an urgent supply shortage with each jam. As the problem seriously affects the Yangtze River Delta's economic development, Jiaxing plans to invest 7.5 billion yuan to transform nine waterways, build up five inland harbours and construct a pivot system to connect inland transportation with ocean shipping

1970s, the original Three Pagodas were dismantled and used to build Jiaxing Stadium. The extreme ignorance and extravagance of using Tang Dynasty bricks to lay the groundwork for the stadium angered many people. Finally, in 1999, in response to repeated appeals by the locals to restore the Three Pagodas, a bridge contractor named Xu Feng volunteered to rebuild the Pagodas free of charge. He researched records of the Tang Dynasty pagodas and studied their structures. According to Xu Feng, the pagodas had probably been surrounded by paddy fields in the past, giving them an imposing look. He reasoned they would look stunted amid five and six-storey structures if rebuilt at their original heights. So he made the Pagodas two metres taller than before. Three original stones marked with rope ruts stand by the new Three Pagodas, testament to the toil and sweat of innumerable boat trackers in the past.

Luofan (Lowering Sail) Pavilion in northern Jiaxing was the landmark that Suzhou boatmen looked for as they approached the city. The area was once

bustling, and in the Qing Dynasty the infamous Shuangkui Lane was established nearby. Being close to the canal, the pavilion's pubs and inns enjoyed steady business from the river traffic. Many young men from wealthy families stopped here on their way to the capital to take the imperial examinations. It is said that a rich Shaoxing businessman recognized the potential for a red-light district and soon opened for business. He named his lane Shuangkui (Double-Champion) to bolster exam candidates' hopes of passing the test and striking it rich in the future after having spent a dissolute night in the lane. But his venture was short-lived; not long after the buildings were in place, grain

endlessly deep. With a little bend and a width of no more than three to five metres, the flagstone road is flanked by a succession of nearly identical two-storey wooden houses. Only a narrow strip of sky can be seen from under the eaves from which, on a rainy day, two long curtains of water would hang. At first sight, almost all of the houses appear to have been built from the same model, much as apartment buildings are today. Each isolated house has a facade on the ground floor. The living rooms downstairs are rather small and the wooden stairs are steep and narrow. But the large latticed windows upstairs allowed alluringly dressed prostitutes to



transport via the canal was replaced by sea transport after silt obstructed the canal in the north. Railway transport arrived soon after, reducing the canal's commercial value even more. Then in 1905, the Qing court abolished imperial examinations. As a result, Shuangkui Lane lost its relevance and became just another ordinary street.

The Remains of a Pleasure District

Despite its early demise, Shuangkui Lane was purpose-built as a red light district, so its buildings are somewhat different from the usual. Viewed from the arch over a gateway bedecked in white walls and dark roof tiles, the lane seems especially quiet and

display themselves to attract business. Likewise the guard boards under the windows feature especially delicate carved patterns, in contrast to plainer local residential houses. An arcade stands at the end of the lane, behind which a small river about seven or eight metres wide connects to the canal. An old man living there told me the lane used to cover a much larger area as it was surrounded by a covered corridor. Guests arriving by boat on a rainy day did not need an umbrella. Later, the corridor burned down and now only the lane remains.

Boundary Bridge of the Wu and Yue States

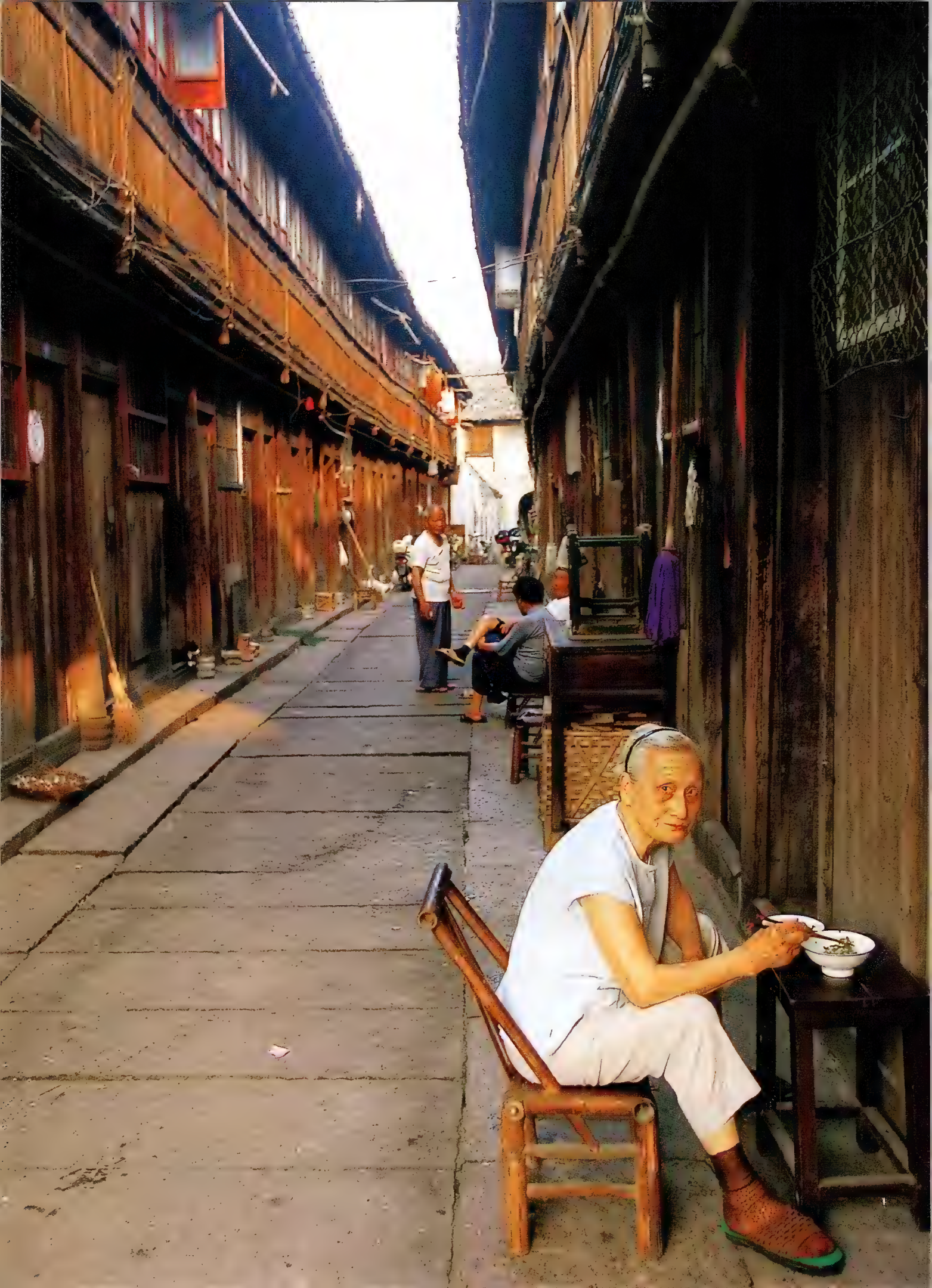
The borders of the ancient Wu and Yue states met

1. In the past, one will know they arrived Jiaxing on seeing the Three Pagodas

2. Many merchants from Yangzhou come to do business in Wangjiangjing River

3. The Changhong (Long Rainbow) Bridge located at Wangjiangjing River owns the largest span among all ancient bridges in Jiaxing

4. A replica of a government grain transport ship built in late Ming and early Qing dynasties is displayed in the Jiaxing Ships Museum



at Jiaxing. The boundary was a small river straddled by a bridge. I asked everyone I met in Honghe Town about the bridge, but the young people I questioned all looked puzzled. It turned out they were migrant labourers from Sichuan, Hunan, Anhui and Jiangxi provinces working for the local township and village businesses. No wonder they knew nothing about the bridge. Then a woman picking mulberry leaves pointed to a path, saying that the river could be found at the end of the trail through the mulberry woods, but that the bridge was closed to traffic.

After winding my way through the mulberry trees for several minutes, the view opened up and I saw the small rivulet. An ancient stone bridge sat astride the water, blocked by a brick wall marked by a stone tablet inscribed with the words "State Boundary Tablet" and enclosed in thumb-thick steel bars. A row of low barracks stood on the other side of the river. Though no troops patrol the area anymore, the barracks add an air of mystery to the scene. During the Spring & Autumn Period (770–476 B.C.), the two states, Wu and Yue, made this river their boundary. The State of Wu to the north and the State of Yue to the south were engaged in a deadly fight for control. Gou Jian, the King of Yue, killed the King of Wu, He Lu. Then Fu Cha, the succeeding King of Wu, defeated Gou Jian and took him, together with his wife and Minister Wan Li, to the State of Yue to work as slaves. Three years later, the trio returned to Yue and went all out to make their state strong. Ten years later they staged a comeback, completely defeating the Wu and becoming the last kingdom of the Spring & Autumn Period. Throughout the ages, while the land of a country can be occupied and annexed, its culture cannot be conquered. War is transitory, but culture is lasting. The diligent, industrious and innovative spirit of the Yue people, and the modesty, endurance and enterprising qualities of the Wu are the essence of their respective cultures, which promoted agriculture employing water conservation techniques and achieved prosperity through aquatic development.

A Boundary to Romance

The State Boundary Bridge was first built in the Song Dynasty and rebuilt in the Ming. The two states had long since buried the hatchet, so why should the State Boundary Tablet still stand on the stone bridge, reinforced with steel bars on both sides? The locals told me that the tablet was originally set on only one side of the bridge. In the 1960s, a military airport was built north of the river, so the place was forbidden to civilians. However, sheep that strayed over the bridge to graze in the lush fields hindered airplanes from taking off and landing. So the garrison's troops built a wall blocking the bridge and set the State Boundary

Tablet in it. This, however, did not stop the determined shepherdesses. With bamboo baskets strapped to their backs and sickles in hand, they climbed over the walled up bridge to get to the airfield to cut grass for their animals. Although no civilians were allowed to enter the military base, they were deemed harmless since they were simple country girls with no interest in military affairs, and the airfield also needed trimming now and again. As time went by, the soldiers began to socialize with the girls.

As a result, one girl found herself pregnant. Nervous and scared, she did not dare to tell her parents or go to the hospital and kept her condition to herself. But as her belly grew with each passing day, her parents became suspicious. Eventually she confessed that the baby's father was a soldier from across the river. Since what had been done could not be undone, the parents took their daughter to the garrison and asked the commander to allow the pair to get married. Instead, the soldier faced an inquiry and was sent back to his hometown. Thereafter, the soldiers affixed steel bars to the wall to prevent people from climbing over it.

1. Shuangkui Lane was purpose-built as a red light district, the flagstone road is flanked by a succession of two-storey wooden houses, leaving only a narrow strip of sky seen from under the eaves

2. The boundary bridge which was used to separate the Wu and Yue states more than 2,400 years ago

3. In Wuzhen, a water town nearby Jiaxing, taking a boat is always the most convenient means of transport





Hangzhou

End of the Grand Canal

Rapidly developing railways, expressways and civil aviation brought the golden era of waterway passenger transport to a close. Slow as they are perceived to be, however, all of the ships shuttling between Suzhou and Hangzhou sail overnight and reach their destinations by the next morning. Passengers do not have to waste time sleeping on the ship, as they can both save a night's hotel expense and experience the ancient culture of the Grand Canal.

Hangzhou's Circulatory System

The most convenient means of transportation in

ancient times were the waterways. Hangzhou's development benefited from the Grand Canal to a great degree. If the West Lake is considered the eyes of the city, then the Grand Canal is its circulatory system. An ample and healthy blood supply is necessary to keep the eyes bright and beautiful. After the Southern Song Dynasty established its capital in Lin'an (now Hangzhou), the Grand Canal became extremely busy. Large boats from Sichuan, Anhui and Jiangxi provinces flowed down the Yangtze River, passing the sluice gate at Zhenjiang to enter the Grand Canal and sail smoothly on to Hangzhou. As the saying goes, "The nation's grain transport by



with spices, pearls and gems arriving from Persia and India.

Gongchen Bridge to Welcome the Emperor

Tourists to Hangzhou must visit Gongchen Bridge, which was originally built in 1631 during the Ming Dynasty and rebuilt in 1885 during the Qing. "Gong" means to welcome, while "chen" refers to the emperor. When the emperor's boat reached this stone arch bridge with its three apertures, it signalled his arrival in Hangzhou. The bridge served as both the place where the emperor was received and the northern gate of the city. During the era of the Republic (1912–1949), the bridge and its vicinity was one of the most brightly lit and prosperous areas of Hangzhou, thanks to convenient transport and being part of the Japanese Concession. Publication of the city's earliest newspaper, the Hangzhou Business Daily, started near the bridge. The first silent film was shown at a street corner east of the bridge. The bridge was then the location of the Hangzhou steamboat dock. The steamboat ran regularly several times a day, and passengers sitting in the small, simple waiting room could sit by the window looking out at the canal scenery and the residential houses across the water. Except for a few steamboats travelling to and from Suzhou, Xinship and Tangxi, most of the vessels were wooden, with plenty of patches on the sails hoisted on their masts. Sailing slowly against the wind, they looked rather impressive and encouraging. The houses across the canal were all built with planks. At dusk, boatmen intending to spend the night ashore would begin to cook, and the fragrance of steaming rice wafted up to the dock. Sirens tooting, the steamboats pulled in to shore. The passengers, most of them well-dressed in Western attire or mandarin jackets worn over gowns and crowned with bowler hats, carried their wicker suitcases off the boats much like travellers leaving an international airport today.

1. Leifeng Pagoda is an optimum place to view the new face of West Lake in Hangzhou

2. If the touristy West Lake is considered the eyes of Hangzhou, then the busy Grand Canal is its circulatory system

water depends solely on the Grand Canal." It was indeed the canal that guaranteed the flow of goods and materials to and from Hangzhou and, in turn, promoted the city's economy. Refugees then escaping the chaos caused by war in the north admired the prosperity of Suzhou and Hangzhou so much, that they exclaimed, "Just as there is paradise in heaven, there are Suzhou and Hangzhou on earth." The saying is still popular today.

During the Yuan Dynasty, Marco Polo visited Hangzhou and declared it "the best city in the world". His descriptions noted the city's affluence and gaiety, the many sumptuous palaces, and the boats loaded



Later, when the railroad started running between Shanghai to Hangzhou and train travel became popular, Gongchen Bridge and its neighbourhood gradually quieted down. However, the stone arch bridge is still the most well-known among dozens of bridges in Hangzhou, with more than 100,000 ships and boats passing by each year.

The Grand Canal originally terminated at Deshengba, but in 1969 it was extended to Genshangang. In 1983, it was extended again to Sanbao Ship Lock. Now the Hangzhou section of the Grand Canal is 38.7 km long, flowing from north to east through the four districts of Yuhang, Gongshu, Xiacheng and Jianggan. Though not as busy as before, the Hangzhou section of the canal still boasts innumerable ancient retaining walls, docks, bridges, residential houses

and warehouses that are proof of its past prosperity.

Waterbus on the Canal

As one of the Yangtze River Delta's most rapidly developing cities, Hangzhou suffers from serious traffic congestion. To alleviate the problem, the city opened a waterbus route on the canal last year. Each boat has a 30-passenger capacity. The 10-km route starts in Wulinmen, stops midway at Xinyifang and ends at Gongchen Bridge. Free from traffic lights, intersections and, most importantly, traffic jams, the ride takes half an hour. The buses are almost as punctual as the subway, especially during peak hours. Now the West Lake Cultural Square across the Wulinmen passenger dock has taken its initial shape, the Grand Canal Cultural Square east of Gongchen



1. After merging into the Qingtangjiang River from the Sanbao Ship Lock, the millennium-old Grand Canal ends

2. Many workers on the boats are farmers who still carry strong accents from their homelands in Xiaoshan or Shaoxing

3. This boat transporting coal from Jining in Shandong Province to Hangzhou has toured for 15 days, passing 13 ship locks on the Grand Canal

4. At the Wulinmen Passenger Port, the Heaven (*Tiantang*) cruise goes back and forth between Hangzhou and Suzhou every evening

Bridge is under construction, and the 12 bridges along the canal in the downtown area are being transformed, creating an atmosphere appropriate for this "Oriental Capital of Leisure".

Looking north from atop Hangzhou Tower, I could see the now 50-metre wide Grand Canal, water that had travelled all the way from Beijing, running straight through the densely packed buildings, its surface smooth and bright, its flagstone embankments caressed by the tips of willow trees bending low. The Grand Canal makes a turn at the Hangzhou passenger dock, flows eastward along the city's ring road and leaves the busy downtown area before merging into the Qiantangjiang River at Sanbao Ship Lock, where the millennium-old waterway ends. 

Translated by G. Q. Li



Travel Tips

Learn More About the Grand Canal

(1) Seven Divisions of the Canal

The Da Yun He (Grand Canal) actually can be divided into seven divisions:

1. Jiangnan Yunhe (South China Canal) - Hangzhou ~ Zhenjiang
2. Liyunhe River - Yangzhou ~ Huaiyin
3. Zhong Yunhe (Middle Canal) - Huaiyin ~ Tai'ierzhuang
4. Lu Yunhe (Shandong Canal) - Tai'ierzhuang ~ Linqing
5. Nan Yun He (South Canal) - Linqing ~ Tianjin
6. Bei Yun He (North Canal) - Tianjin ~ Tongxian
7. Tonghuihe River - Tongxian ~ Beijing

(2) Cultural and Economic Influences of the Canal

Like a string of pearls, the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal connects a dozen of historical and cultural cities including Beijing, Tianjin, Linqing, Liaocheng, Jining, Xuzhou, Huai'an, Yangzhou, Zhenjiang, Changzhou, Wuxi, Suzhou, Jiaxing and Hangzhou. Wherever flows the Grand Canal, there is economic prosperity and cultural development. The places embracing the Canal not only abound in world famous silk, pottery, porcelain and tea, but also gave birth to the four great classical Chinese novels of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Outlaws of the Marsh*, *Journey to the West* and *A Dream of Red Mansions*. Proudly they possess the world cultural heritage sites - in Beijing, the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, the Summer Palace, the Temple of Heaven, the Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian; in Shandong Province, Mount Taishan, Temple and Cemetery of Confucius, and the Confucius Mansion in Qufu (hometown of Kongzi); in Jiangsu Province, classical gardens of Suzhou, as well as Kunqu opera and ancient Chinese guqin music of cultural heritage. The Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal itself is also applying to be listed as a World Cultural Heritage Site.

Recommended Scenic Spots Along the Canal:

The Grand Canal spans four provinces of Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang as well as Beijing and Tianjin cities, which have 11 world cultural heritage sites, a dozen of state-level scenic spots, and over 160 cultural relic sites under state protection. As there are too many famous historical sites and scenic spots with too much to tell, we will only introduce here some important places of interests close to the Grand Canal.

■ **Beijing:** Forbidden City (40-100 yuan), Shichahai Lake, Residence of Prince Gong (20 yuan).

■ **Tianjin:** Haihe River scenic area, woodcut New Year pictures at Yangliuqing.

■ **Shandong Province:** Shanxi-Shaanxi Guild Hall in Liaocheng City (15 yuan), Guangyue Tower (15 yuan), Dongchang Lake, Grand Eastern Mosque of Jining,

(3) Challenges of the Canal

The Grand Canal is the earliest and longest man-made river in the world. It accounts for one third of China's inland water transportation, equivalent to the transport volume of three railway lines. But owing to prolonged use and lack of maintenance, as well as short of water in northern China, the conveying capacity of the Canal has not been brought to full play. Presently its mileage open to navigation is 1,442 km, among which 877 km are open all year round and distributed mostly in Shandong, Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces south of the Yellow River.

(4) The South-to-North Water Transfer Project

In order to nourish China's thirsty northern parts including Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei Province, experts have planned the expansive project of "Nan Shui Bei Diao", known as the South-to-North Water Transfer Project in English.

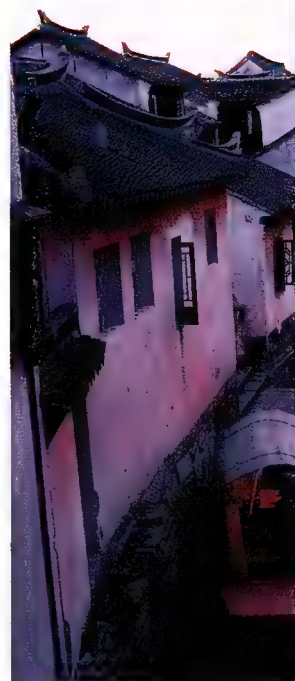
The project is the largest of its kind ever planned. It has been under study for almost five decades before the Chinese government finally approved the multi-billion dollar investment in November 2002.

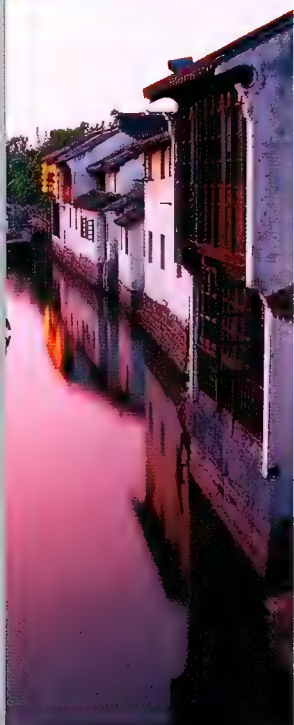
The three south-to-north canals, which will stretch across the eastern, middle and western parts of China, will eventually link the country's four major rivers - the Yangtze River, Yellow River, Huaihe River and the Haihe River.

The first and second phases of the east route and the first phase of the middle route will be constructed by 2010. It is hoped that by 2008 enough of the infrastructure will be in place to help Qingdao in Shandong Province host the water sports during the 2008 Olympic Games. The western route is still in planning stage, and is expected to be located on Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, with an elevation of 3,000 ~ 5,000 metres.

Temple and Cemetery of Confucius, and the Kong Family Mansion in Qufu (100 yuan), scenic area of the Weishan Lake.

■ **Jiangsu Province:** The tomb of Emperor Chu at the foot of the Lion Hill in Xuzhou (25 yuan), Tomb of Emperor Chu at the foot of Mount Guishan (25 yuan), Han Dynasty Tomb with Stone Relief (10 yuan), Xiang Yu's Hometown in Suqian (10 yuan), Anlan Temple of the Dragon King at Zaohe (10 yuan), Huai'an water control project with the watercourse flyover and culverts beneath the Grand Canal, the Former Residence of Zhou Enlai (10 yuan) and the Memorial Hall (15 yuan), Emperor Kangxi's Cruise Route on the Grand Canal, the scenic area of the Slender West Lake in Yangzhou (50 yuan), the Daming Temple (30 yuan), Tomb of Puhaddin (12 yuan), Xijin Ancient Ferry Street in Zhenjiang, Golden Hill Temple (45 yuan), Former Residence of Pearl Buck (10 yuan), in Changzhou City, the Bijl





Lane, the Dongpo Park (8 yuan), the relic site of Yancheng Town, in Wuxi, the Second Spring under Heaven (20 yuan), the ancient Grand Canal, in Suzhou, the classical gardens (30–60 yuan), Shantang Street, Maple Bridge Scenic Area (35 yuan), the Cold Hill Temple (20 yuan)'s Precious Belt Bridge.

■ **Zhejiang Province:** The Jiaxing Ship Museum, the Rainbow Bridge, the waterside town of Wuzhen (60 yuan); in Hangzhou, the scenic area of the West Lake, the Gongchen Bridge, Hefang Street.

** All entrance fees are for reference only and subject to change by the scenic areas.*

Transportation:

Taking a tour of the Grand Canal, you can start either from Beijing or Hangzhou. If setting off from Beijing, you might be disappointed, because not a trace of the grain transport terminal in the past is available. It is a great pity that the section of the Grand Canal from Beijing to Hebei looks so desolate.

The Canal regains its vitality only after it reaches Shandong Province, and Jining is the northernmost city opened to navigation on the Canal. But Liaocheng city is not to miss with its reputation as "water town north of the Yellow River." The Canal is parallel almost all the way with expressways (freeways), and transportation is easy with many buses shuttling from place to place. If you want to drive your own car, my suggestion is to avoid the expressway. Driving on the ordinary roads along the Canal is slower yet inexpensive, but you will not miss the scenery and historical sites along the Canal.

The best part of the Canal is in Jiangsu Province, where the water supply is abundant and watercourse wide. Northern Jiangsu, in particular, has reached the standard for the second grade fairway, with the source of the Canal — Hangou — as a major town for grain transport in history. From Zhenjiang to Hangzhou the cities along the Canal south of the Yangtze River are all prosperous and close to each other, as this is the busiest part of the Canal.

Currently transportation on the Canal is almost all for freight except for the passenger liner "Heaven" (*Tiantang*) shuttling between Suzhou and Hangzhou. It is a pleasure boat, completely sealed up with hi-fi, ballroom and karaoke halls. It sets off at 17:30 p.m. from Suzhou and Hangzhou respectively, and arrives at the destination the next morning.

130 yuan/ person for twin-bedded room; 88 yuan/ person for four-bedded room. Address of the port (Suzhou): Renminqiao Beitu, Nanmen
Address of the port (Hangzhou): North of Hangzhou Tower, Wulinmen

The bus route on the Canal in Hangzhou combines sightseeing with transportation, and presently has three docks — at Gongchen Bridge, Xinyifang and Wulinmen. In 2008 the bus route will be extended further south with a stop at Genshanmen and the New Town South of Qiantang River, respectively.

6:30–18:00 (departs every 15 minutes)

fare: 3 yuan per person.

Accommodation:

■ Beijing

JJ-Inn at Guangqumen (China's chain hotel):

1, Eastern Zone, Donghuashi Beili, Chongwen District.

Remarks: Clean and economical, the hotel is easy to reach as it is within 10 minutes' walking distance from the Beijing Railway Station. If taking the airport bus, get off at the Beijing International Hotel, and a minimum taxi fee will take you there.

Standard room: 188 yuan Tel: (10) 5100 5188

■ Tianjin

Tianbo Hotel Tianjin (3-star):

11 Liujing Rd, Hedong District, by the Haihe River, 0.5 kilometre from the Railway Station.

Standard room: 258 yuan Tel: (22) 8558 0888

■ Shandong Province

Liaocheng Dongchang Hotel (3-star):

Addr: Located by the Dongchang Lake, not far from the ancient town of Dongchang.

Remarks: The hotel owns fresh air and fine surroundings.

Standard room: 200 yuan Tel: (635) 8421 002.

Jining Hotel:

73 Eastern Taibai Rd, in downtown area with easy transportation.

Standard room: 180 yuan Tel: (537) 2367 166

■ Jiangsu Province

Eversky Hotel of Xuzhou (3-star):

Addr: 128 Southern Fuxing Rd, Xuzhou, close to the Railway Station.

Standard room: 220 yuan Tel: (516) 3818 188

Suqian Guest House (2-star):

Addr: 3 Xingfu Rd, Suqian

Standard room: 120 yuan Tel: (527) 4212 553

Huai'an State Guest House (4-star):

Addr: 121 Northern Huaihai Rd, in downtown Huai'an

Remarks: With a quiet and fine environment.

Standard room: 350 yuan Tel: (517) 3766 666

Sequoia Hotel of Yangzhou (3-star):

Addr: 63 Sanyuan Rd, Yangzhou

Remarks: Clean and newly remodeled, close to the Imperial Dock - beginning of Qing Emperor Qianlong's cruising route, and to the Siwang Pavilion and the Memorial Hall of the Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou.

Standard room: 260 yuan Tel: (514) 7315 888

Zhenjiang Grand Hotel (3-star):

Addr: Located west of the Railway Station, close to the Former Residence of Pearl Buck, taking only the minimum taxi fee to go to the Xijin Ancient Ferry Street.

Standard room: 260 yuan Tel: (511) 5236 666

Changzhou Gongyuan Hotel (2-star):

Addr: 85 Western Yanling Rd, in downtown area, close to the Tianning Temple and Dongpo Park.

Standard room: 150 yuan Tel: (519) 6602 606

Wuxi Liangxi Hotel (2-star):

Addr: 63 Zhongshan Rd, in downtown Wuxi, close to the Donglin Academy Nanchan Temple.

Standard room: 160 yuan Tel: (510) 2726 812

JJ-Inn Liuyuan Garden, Suzhou (China's chain hotel):

Addr: 2 Liuyuan Rd, close to Shantang Street and also not far from Huqiu Pagoda and the Hanshan Temple.

Standard room: 168 yuan Tel: (512) 6704 1266

■ Zhejiang Province

Jiaxing Xiucheng Hotel (2-star):

Addr: 458 Hexing Rd, in downtown Jiaxing

Remarks: Convenient for transportation and shopping.

Standard room: 180 yuan Tel: (573) 2080 921

Hangzhou International Youth Hostel:

Addr: Located in Nanshan Rd, facing the China Academy of Art, in the centre of the city's scenic area by the West Lake, within walking distance to many scenic spots of the Lake.

Remarks: Many bars are nearby the hostel, it is lively at night with various kinds of entertainment.

Standard room: 200 yuan Tel: (571) 8791 8948

Yanghe: A Lost Home on the Grand Canal

— Remembrance from the Luo Family at Yanghe

Photos • Luo Shicheng

Article • Dr. Engelbert Altenburger

Editor's note: This true story is from the memories of an old man who has spent his childhood living in Yanghe, a small town by the Grand Canal in Jiangsu Province.

When I was grown up in Yanghe during the early 1920s, China was in great misery. I learnt little about the country's distress, except that foreign powers were interfering and that civil war had started. The name of Yanghe ("Foreign River" or "Foreigners' River"), too, must have something to do with foreigners, which during Qing Dynasty were related with Dutch trade.

In these turbulent times, however, only Shanghai seemed to be of attractiveness, which as China's gate to the world had come under foreign rule. In contrast, the province had fallen in a desolate state, and the famous Grand Canal, as far as I remember, was obsolete, without any water or boats.

The estate of the Luo family was huge. When I was a child it belonged to my uncle of the maternal line. If his horses started to run from our home, they ran all the day far beyond the vast Luoma Lake, and still had not arrived at the property's margin, where to the north of the lake the neighboring estate of Ma Wei was located.

All the property was agricultural land used for dry field farming, mostly grown with wheat, rice and millet. In wintertime the kids were playing on the fields with their sledges, when white snow was covering the dried soil.

The Luo family granted interest-free money to the farmers who used to pay back after the harvest. My family had a good reputation, as the landlord had the post of Yamen-governor (Yamen Daotai) of the Yanghe area for eight generations. The Luo

family was furthermore reputed as patron for numerous projects, including public facilities and bridge building. But their main income was from investments in the local wine factory. This still exists today and has even grown from two production sites to six.

Yanghe was indeed famous for its wines and liquors, but most known for its Gaoliang wine called "Yanghe Daqu". This wine during the Qing Dynasty was transported in large quantities down south to southern Jiangsu, to the large cities of Changzhou, Wuxi or Suzhou, and even as far as Hangzhou on the southern end of the Grand Canal. On the way back the canal boats



brought beautiful stones from the Taihu Lake, which were used for garden landscaping and house construction. Stones were a rare and precious building material in the vast plains of central and northern Jiangsu.

When construction work in Yanghe had come to an end, the boats were carrying rice and other foodstuff, as they did since the times of the Mongols, when the new Grand Canal was reconstructed on his new route to Khanbalik (former Beijing during Yuan Dynasty).

Less for its historic background than for its wealth the Luo family was in constant danger. As the Luo estate was built along the Grand Canal, and not far from Zaohe River, which was the temporary residence of Emperor Qianlong on Luoma Lake, the

Qing emperors, according to the saying of elderly locals, often stopped there for overnight and short recreation. Yanghe must have been a favourite place for the emperor, who regularly travelled on the Grand Canal to the south for staying around beautiful Taihu Lake and Suzhou.

How risky life and travel was in China before, my mother often had told me about.

The Luo estate, or called "Luo Fort", was built on higher ground than the rest of Yanghe city. It looked like a square fortification, reinforced with a moat and earthen wall.

Although there existed a local voluntary civil defense force, my mother always carried a gun with her and lived in constant fear. But luckily fighting took place very rarely. In most cases, when foreign gangster had arrived, demanding blackmail or ransom money, the Luo family started into negotiations... and then better paid. It was the fear of being kidnapped that brought me to Shanghai.

Probably some day, when I may come back to Yanghe, I will arrive by boat on the Grand Canal. Some day this water might be crystal clear like those in Europe, filled with modern tourist cruises that would also bring back that special exotic taste from far-away regions and countries to the city of "Foreigners' River".

About the author: Professor Luo is now an emeritus professor of Agricultural Sciences from Zhongxing University in Taizhong, Taiwan. When he was young, he was educated in Shanghai's French concession area, where he learnt about western culture and the Roman Catholic Church.

1. Prof. Luo and his wife Mrs Tsai at their visit of the ancient Luocun Village in Yanghe, a small town located south of Suqian City, Jiangsu Province in 2002. The background shows a "moon gate", which was part of an inner wall of the large "Luo Fort"
2. Prof. Luo and his wife Mrs. Tsai at Luoma Lake (Jiangsu) in 2002



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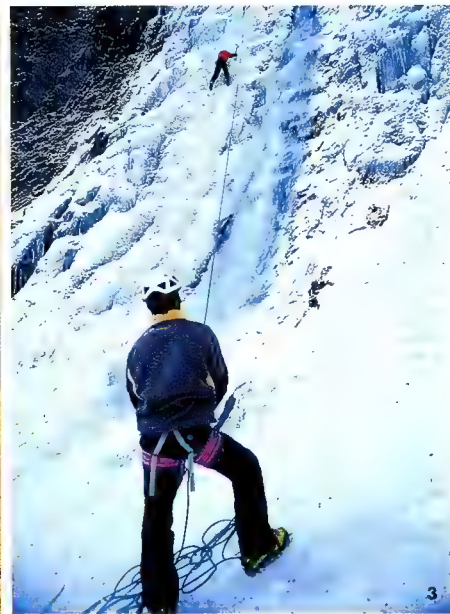
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Ice Climbing on Mt Four Maidens

Photos & Article • Zeng Chengdong

The mountain situated in Southwest China's Sichuan Province is not only celebrated for its stunning natural landscapes, but also a paradise for ice climbing fans from home and abroad during winter. In fact, I never expect that this must-subject for mountaineers can be that exciting.



In last winter, I followed the Chinese Mountaineering Team to the mountain to shoot their training of ice climbing there. Mt Four Maidens (Siguniang), bordering the Xiaojin and Wenchuan counties in Sichuan, is comprised of four peaks as well as some gullies. The main peak, Memei, stands 6,250 metres above sea level and contains more than 100 waterfalls. In winter, they all turn into sparkling and crystal-clear icicles and icebergs.

On the New Year's Day, we left Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan, and drove along the Minjiang River to Mt Four Maidens. On the way we passed Wolong Nature Reserve and the 4,000-metre high Balang Mountain. In the afternoon we arrived at the central area of our destination. The place is 3,200 metres above the sea level. It was -8°C . I began to breathe hard walking on the plateau.

Right Judgement

The mountaineering team was led by Dr. Ma Zhiqin. The team members included Sun Bin and Zhao Kai. They were going to climb the ice cliffs at Shuangqiao (Twin Bridge) Gully. Zhao and Sun are the two best ice climbers in China. Zhao returned to China after studying in the United States. As a man of 1.67-metre-tall and 60 kilograms in weight, he is capable of doing nine chin-ups on one finger.

They emphasized that the judgment of an ice cliff allows no error. For a rock climber, strength, skill and courage are enough to secure success, but ice climbing is different. Carrying my camera and other equipment, I followed the team to the selected ice cliffs. Sun Bin divided the team into groups to climb up different ice cliffs since the same cliff cannot support too many climbers. Sun Bin's group

was going to conquer what the Chinese climbers call "da guabing" (big icicle). It also has a foreign name given by overseas climbers. According to Sun Bin, all the ice cliffs here have both Chinese and foreign names.

Armed to the Teeth

When we were still on the highway, these ice cliffs seemed to be just in front of us. By the time we reached the end of the road, it was -8°C . As there was no road leading to the cliffs we had to crawl among the stones and rocks and on the snow-covered ground. It took local residents carrying loads half an hour to reach the cliffs. I, empty-handed, spent an hour before reaching the destination, soaked with sweat. Came into my eyes were the huge, straight and hard ice cliffs. The straightest one formed a right angle.

The climbers began to wear boots, helmets, and examine the safety rope and hook. These outfits seem to be the best imported goods. I learned that such a set of outfits values thousands of yuan. With life at stake, the money cannot be saved.

Sun Bin was ready, with his hands holding an ice axe, his feet wearing crampons. Kicking the ice hard, he climbed the ice cliff as if walking on the flat ground. What's the most difficulty moment was when the ice axe was waved in the space while his feet had to look for a strongpoint. It was really a soul stirring moment. I seemed to hear a conversation between the man and nature. The mountain was so quiet. The only sound that could be heard came from the axe cutting the ice.

Sharing the Experience

A few days later, some foreigners were invited by Zhao Kai to join us. They were the world-class ice

1. Ice climbing is a professional sport testing a person's stamina, skills and will
2. A Tibetan lady sets a base at the foot of the mountain
3. Ice climbers must be fully equipped and extremely attentive

climbers from France, the US, Italy and Canada. One of them, nicknamed "Ponytail", is a French in his 30s. His skinny figure tells directly he is a spider-man. He's the top ice climber and the inventor of the most advanced ice axe in the world, according to Zhao Kai. Another man, a 48-year-old Canadian, has an ice climbing experience for over 20 years. He is the only solo ice climber not using any protection. There was also a French ice-climbing photographer.

Ice climbers cannot have lunch when they are climbing the ice for it's difficult to eat anything. Sun Bin told me that two British men even slept on the ice cliff when they climbed the Mt Four Maidens two year ago. But I could not help wondering how

they could cope with their bowel movements during the days.

For several days these overseas and Chinese climbers had exchanged their experiences and had competitions among themselves. As ice climbing is just a new sport in China, said Zhao Kai, Chinese climbers should learn more from their overseas counterparts. In 2005 there were about 1,000 people who come to Mt Four Maidens to challenge their own limit of capacity. They come and leave unknown to the wide public. To me, they are a special group of people.

Translated by Chen Qiuping

Distribution of Icefalls at Mt Four Maidens



Area 1. From the gully entrance to Wuse (Five-Colour) Mountain Villa (8 km). There are few icefalls.

Area 2. The Five-Coloured Mountain Villa area, has three large icefalls, all on the left side. They are all big icefalls with small slope, and each can accommodate two lines of climbers. They are ideal for beginners to practise.

Area 3. Shuangqiao Inn is about 10 km away from the entrance. There are five icefalls in this section, three near the Inn and the other two further down into the gully on both sides of the road. The first three are all narrow and long with icicles on the top. The rest are difficult to climb.

Area 4. Located 11~13 km from the gully entrance, Area 4 boasts a number of icefalls which are better qualified for climbing. A complete training program can be conducted on Route 2. Route 3 comprises much thinner hanging ice curtain, presenting greater difficulty for the climbers. Route 5 is very big and wide. Its lower part is a slope of three full rope lengths and its top is the 20-metre icicle. The ice is good in quality and orderly. It can allow several groups to climb at the same time.

Area 5. An area of sea buckthorn forests, Area 5 extends from the 13th km to the 14.5th km. In its surrounding area there are several routes. But they are all in the mountain valley, receiving no sunshine, having a smaller volume of water and being in fragment shape.

Area 6. About 16 km from the entrance, Area 6 passes a small bridge in the mid-way. The icefalls are in not in good shapes.

Area 7. The area is located 19 km from entrance. Route 2 will be more ideal if the water ice is connected to the ground, while Route 5 is a straight and beautiful icefall.

Area 8. This is the area after the Nanyuba. Icefalls are concentrated in this area, of different difficulty degrees. The first icefall seen at the Nanyuba is wide and divides into several parts with the undulating mountain. The bottom part is ideal for beginners. The following parts become increasingly upright, with icicles on the top.

Travel Tips

Mt Four Maidens Scenic Area, located in the middle section of the Qionglai Mountain Range, covers a total area of 450 sq km. The ice cliffs concentrate in the 34-km long Twin Bridge Gully. They are formed of frozen running water from the upper source. Smaller icefalls are several metres high while the large ones can be more than 500 metres high. They present varying degrees of difficulty for the climbers. There are about 60 to 70 icefalls which can be climbed. Most of them are distributed on the left side of the gully. The period from December to March is the gold time for ice climbing activities.

Transportation:

There are ready transport facilities from Chengdu to Mt Four Maidens. A shuttle bus between Chengdu and Xiaojin County leaves Xinnanmen (New South Gate) Bus Station in the morning. Getting off the bus at Rilong Town.

Admission (Off season between Dec 1~Mar 31):

Shuangqiao Gully: 50 yuan/ person

Changping Gully: 50 yuan/ person

Haizi Gully: 40 yuan/ person



1. Mt. Four Maidens has good conditions for ice climbing and has attracted both Chinese and foreign ice climbers



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A WINTER TRIP TO MT CHANGBAI

Mt Changbai (Ever White), in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture on the border of Jilin Province, is a national nature reserve. The water that flows down from the mountain is regarded as the mother river of ethnic Koreans. Mt Changbai comprises four slopes and 16 peaks. Only the eastern slope falls within the territory of North Korea, while the other three belong to Baishan City in Jinlin. The northern slope in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture has been developed for tourism.

Wheels Stick in the Snow

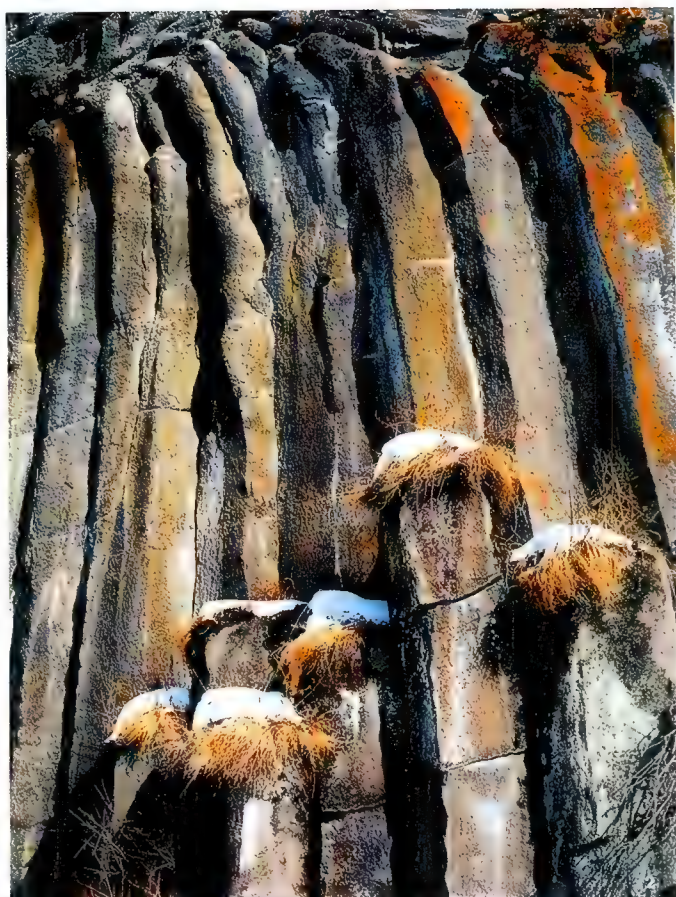
As a child, I heard lots of legends of Mt Changbai. Certain myths about ginseng were even more fascinating to me. For instance, a still-maturing ginseng plant, called a "hammer", would eventually grow into a fairy "Ginseng Doll".

With great anticipation, a small group of friends and I decided to start our journey in early winter and do our own driving. It takes about six hours to drive from Changchun to Mt Changbai. Since the

temperature was already very low in early December, the highway conditions were worse than expected, with thick layers of snow on the surface and ice on either side. A single mistake could leave us stuck in the snow. Even though we drove cautiously, we still had to get out and push the car twice. In the northeast, getting out to push your stalled or stranded car is a common winter occurrence. If pushing by yourself doesn't work, flag down the driver of any large passing truck to help you; for 10 yuan he will usually be happy to do the job.

By the time we arrived at Fusong, we were all exhausted. We sought out a restaurant, sat cross-legged on the little *kang* (an earthen bench with a builtin heat source underneath) and ordered an "all-in-one-pot", a traditional northeast dish of stewed meat with peas. We ate Chinese bread, sausages made of pork and pig's blood and drank rice wine. Fantastic!

Warmed by our meal, we hit the road again. Fusong City is about three hours from Baishan County. The passing scenery consisted of one thing: snow. I



3

dozed off, but before long we had to push the car again. In Changbai County, we spotted an inn not far off. The temperature was -20°C and a freezing wind was blowing.

It was dinner time, and we couldn't wait any longer. All of us were eager to sample the most famous delicacy on the table — snow frogs. The tasty and nutritious snow frogs of Mt Changbai are absolutely free of contamination. Abundant energy is essential for getting around on Mt Changbai in winter and eating snow frogs is a good way to get such energy.

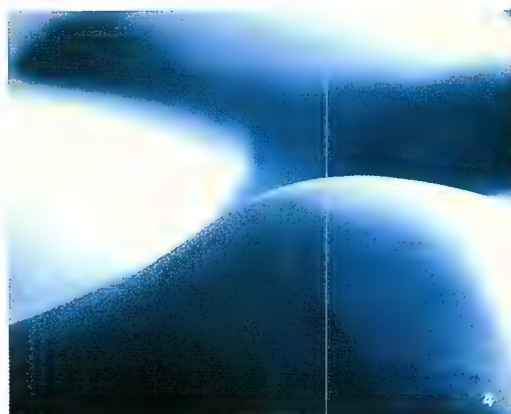
Frozen Cameras, Frozen Falls

After a good night's sleep, we woke to fine weather and continued our journey to the mountains. It takes two hours to get from Baishan County to the western slope of Baitoushan where we would see the famous icefalls of Badaogou and Shiwu Daogou. Mt Changbai is embraced by 24 gullies, the abrupt vertical breaks between which create the waterfalls.

And the cold winter weather turns them into icefalls.

The road conditions around the mountain were pretty good. We would not be in danger as long as we didn't drive too fast. Thick layers of snow blanketed both sides of the highway. Looking down from a high gully onto other gullies below, we noticed houses on every gully. The snow on their roofs

1. Mt Changbai becomes a snowy world in winter
2. Interesting landforms can be found on the mountain
3. Iced waterfalls reflect another kind of beauty
4. Smooth accumulated snow





shimmered with reflected sunlight, creating a scene from a fairy tale.

Entering the town of Shiwu Daogou, we could hear bubbling streams and see rays of sunlight penetrating the gullies. The icefalls really deserve their reputation. The different vertical heights between the falls are generally more than 20 metres. Of the four great scenic features of Mt Changbai (fir trees, sunsets, Tianchi and icefalls), I felt the icefalls were the most amazing.

Still, we were having so much fun that we didn't really notice the cold. We continued to photograph the icefalls as we moved along, as they were all fairly close together. After Shiwu Daogou, we headed to Badaogou. Because of the rough terrain, we could not drive, so we hiked the rest of the way.

Badaogou was much deeper and more rugged than Shiwu Daogou. As we walked on the thick snow, I wanted to lie down and roll around on it. With every step, our legs drove down into snow that came up to our knees. This was how winter should be! After walking a short while, I could hear the tinkling music of the waterfalls. Overcome with joy, I started running in the snow. Suddenly I saw it; a waterfall, nearly 20 metres tall, seemed to freeze solid in a split second. I could hear the sound of flowing water but I could not see any movement in the waterfall's icy stream. The icefall was plunging into the still pool below. Although the icefalls of Shiwu Daogou outnumbered those of Badaogou, the mightiness of the latter was far more impressive.

At noon, we rushed to Songjiang Town for lunch before we began to prepare to shoot the sunset at the southern slope. At a local restaurant, we sat at on a kang again, ordered chicken with mushrooms and drank some more rice wine.

Bathing in Hot Springs

Tianchi can only be reached by the northern slope in winter because the western and southern slopes are as yet unexplored. The natural forest of Mt Changbai is huge and the trees tall. Sunset is best viewed from a high point. My friends found a 70-metre tall radio tower on the southern slope that they considered the best observatory. But as I have a fear of heights, I didn't join them.

The northern slope is a popular holiday destination. Apart from taking in the breathtaking scenery of Tianchi, visitors may observe Northeast Asian tigers, bathe in the hot springs and sample eggs boiled in spring water. There are Korean-style dance performances as well. Attracted by all the fascinating activities, we decided to stay there for a day. The northern slope is about two hours from Baishan County and the accommodation there is first class.

We went to see the Northeast Asian tigers after

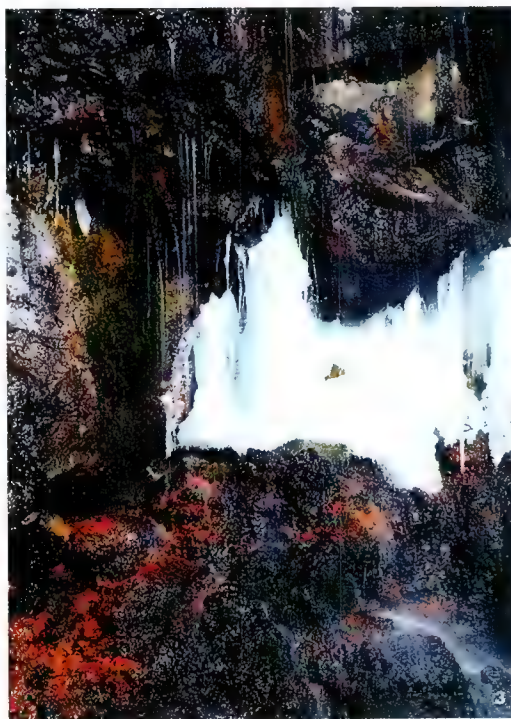
lunch. The tiger park reverses the captive/spectator dynamic: visitors, as well as all of the zoo's staff, stand inside a cage while the tigers roam free in the open area outside. The tigers are not tame. When a zoo employee tossed a live chicken out into the open area, the bird was torn to pieces within a minute. It seemed very cruel.

We relaxed with a hot spring bath after dinner. There is something invigorating about bathing in an open hot spring in winter in Mt Changbai. The moonlight reflected by the snow on the ground mimicked daylight. The water temperature was about -40°C, while the outdoor air temperature was about -30°C. With the huge temperature difference, once your wet head was out of the spring water, frost would form on your hair.

On the third day, we set out for Tianchi early in the morning in the hope of watching the sunrise over the crater lake. We climbed stairs and hiked along chain trails, while steep cliffs dropped away below us. Sometimes it was hard to remain calm. Two hours later, we arrived at Tianchi. The water had turned to ice. The sky and the lake were of the same colour, entirely white.

"Going up is easy, while hiking down is hard." Mt Changbai brings the meaning of this saying to life. I rolled and slid nearly all the way down the steep, rugged slope heading back — just another unforgettable experience on another amazing trip. 

Translated by Ezekiel Pang



1. Houses covered in snow at the foot of Mt Changbai
2. The endangered Northeast tiger
3. Icicles between rocks



Travel Tips

Air Flights from Beijing to Changchun, capital of Jilin Province, take about 1.5 hours. Round-trip ticket: 1,000 yuan

Railway No direct route is available. Take the train to Tonghua and travel to Erdaobai Huang by coach.

Car To get to Mt Changbai, you must pass Baihe Town. Take National Highway 201 and the 202 Provincial Highway via the town. From Dunhua, drive via National Highway 201; from Yanji, drive along Provincial Highway 202; or from Tonghua, take National Highway 201 to Baihe. In addition, the Changbaishan Scenic Area falls under the administration of Antu County, from where you may also take a coach.

Transport within the mountain area Two routes access Mt Changbai. If you travel from Yanji City, ascend the northern slope. If you set out from Shenyang in Heilongjiang Province, ascend the southern slope to reach Erdao Baihe town. To travel up the western slope, Erdao Baihe is a good starting point. For the southern slope, go from Songjiang town. These two routes cover two-thirds of the scenic sites in Mt Changbai, including Tianchi and Changbaishan Canyon. At Erdao Baihe Town, visit the scenic spots of the northern slope by coach; fare: 40 yuan per person. If you want to go to Tianchi, hire a jeep at the beginning of the road leading to the lake; fare: 80 yuan per person. Due to the rough road surface, all other vehicles are prohibited. If you are fit and interested enough, you can hike to Tianchi in about 90 minutes. Or hire a jeep at Erdao Baihe to take you up to Tianchi; cost: 100 yuan per person. Fares to access the mountain from the southern slope are similar. A trans-mountain highway connects the two mountain gates.

Admissions

Adult: 60 yuan; Children: 30 yuan; Elderly or student: 30 yuan
Waterfalls: 15 yuan; Covered corridor up the mountain: 25 yuan; Lesser Heavenly Pond (Xiao Tian Chi), underground forest: 10 yuan; hot spring bath: 80 yuan/person; Northeast Tiger Park: 30 yuan; Mt Changbai Nature Museum: 20 yuan

Accommodation

Almost all hotels on the mountain are near hot springs. Standard room rates during the peak season are around 200–400 yuan, and 150 yuan in the low season. Guesthouse opposite Lesser Heavenly Pond: Quite well equipped. Room rate: 70 yuan/bed (low season), or 140 yuan for a standard room. Yuehua Guesthouse: Slightly older. Guests are offered free and unlimited hot spring baths, while everyone can enjoy a starry night through the windows.

Eat As You Can in Shenzhen

Photos • Wong Chung Fai, Miu Miu Article • Miu Miu

As Hong Kong's closest economy competitor, Shenzhen has also strived to develop as a better claim "Diners' Paradise". Delicacies from Sichuan, Jiangxi, Inner Mongolia, as well as Thailand or Italy can all be sampled in this Special Economic Zone.



Serve the People No.1 Production Team

Who from the older generations could have imagined this day Chinese can even make money of the Cultural Revolution! The No. 1 Production Team is a veritable museum of pictures and objects from that era. Army green bags printed with the slogan "Serve the People", the essential water bottle that Red Guards carry, vintage radios, etc. On the walls are filled with revolution slogans and historical pictures. More, staff are kitted out in outfits of the Red Guards, the manager is called the Team Leader, customers are referred to as Commune

Members, and the snack bar is called the Provision Cooperative.

The restaurant mainly provides Chinese home-style dishes. One of the house dishes is the *San Jun Bing Tuan* (the third battalion), which is actually steamed three eggs with minced pork and preserved vegetables and rice in an earthen pot. Another must-try is the steamed grass carp. All of them look simple yet mouth-watering!

Add: 2083 Honggui Road, Luohu District, Shenzhen

Tel: (755) 8247 6222 / 8247 5333

Opening hours: 9:00-00:30

Getting there: Shenzhen Metro Exit D, Da Ju Yuan (Grand Theatre) Station

Yurt in the City Cao Yuan Shi Fu

Cao Yuan Shi Fu (Eatery on Pastureland) isn't as simple as finding a few Mongolian dressed waiters, but has even brought the entire Mongolian yurt (or called Ger) to the Shenzhen hub.

Mongolian dishes are of course its best sellers — lamb skewers, lamb stew, barbequed whole lamb, but it also serves Cantonese

nutritional soups for soothing diners' throats.

At night bonfire parties will be arranged so customers can experience true Mongolian hospitality. Dancers will teach everyone the basics of folk dancing, and the evening is likely to leave diners with memories of delightful music and hearty laughter.



1. The restaurant contains strong revolution taste
2. The VIP room is decorated in simple country style
3. Staff at the No.1 Production Team are dressed in Red Guards' attire
4. The Snack Bar is called the Provisions Co-operative
5. Interesting outlook of San Jun Bing Tuan
6. Diners in Cao Yuan Shi Fu's Mongolian yurt
7. Have good times with a Mongolian performer
8. Tamb kebabs are a hit of customers
9. The roasted whole lamb (680 yuan) can feed up 10 people
10. Mongolian yurt in the hub of Shenzhen

Add: 5026 Luosha Road, Luohu District, Shenzhen

Tel: (755) 2541 0652/ 2540 6618

Opening hours: 9:30-23:30

Getting there: Take bus no. 205 or 417 at Luohu Bus Station



Folk Chuan Cuisine Ba Shu Feng

"Ba" and "Shu" together refer to West China's Sichuan Province, while "Feng" literally means "wind", but also implies "trend" or "customs". The restaurant has established its own farm far in Chengdu that supplies the ingredients in Shenzhen — this has given the eatery much credibility.

Heavy wooden furniture, white table cloths, staff dressed in traditional cotton clothing, all but to remind diners the restaurant's style. Outside the restaurant, a master is making Sichuan sugar sculptures that are much loved by children.

Another surprise is *Liang Yi Bai Rou* (laundry pork) — slices of marbled pork are hung on a small rack, a la hanging laundry. Sheer entertainment by just watching the eight-treasure tea being served



impeccably by the waitress who pours with a long-spout pot is worth the price — and the tea is fabulous.

Add: Bldg 405, Zhenxing Road, Futian District, Shenzhen

Tel: (755) 8325 4969 Opening hours: 11:00–22:30

Getting there: Shenzhen Metro Exit B, Ke Xue Guan (Science Museum) Station



Patent Stewed Soup Zi Wei Tang

Don't skip this restaurant just because of its long Chinese name. In fact, the seven Chinese characters all but mean delicious soup! Legend has it that this traditional method of stewing soup in an earthen vat originated in Hongzhou city (today's Nanchang, capital city of Jiangxi Province) during the reign of Emperor Jiayou (1056 — 1063) of the Northern Song Dynasty. All ingredients are meticulously selected. Ordering other Jiangxi dishes, you can enjoy a genuine and nutritious meal.



Add: 77/99 Huafa Road North, Futian District, Shenzhen

Tel: (755) 8376 7999/8376 7666

Opening hours: 10:30–14:30/16:30–22:30

Getting there: Shenzhen Metro Exit B, Ke Xue Guan Station

Italian vs Thai L16

What do Italy and Thailand have in common? They are both sun-drenched countries with seafood traditions. The marriage of Italian and Thai cuisine in equally sunny and seafood-worshipping Shenzhen, is what fusion restaurant L16 is all about.

People are no stranger to L16 — the branch in Central (Hong Kong) is headed by former Miss Hong Kong Isabella Kau and her husband Patrick Leong. L16 fuses Italian and Thai cuisines to form a new style that fits in right at home in this young and bustling metropolis.

Signature dishes here include Thai-style turbot fish, perfectly crisp on the outside, while the fish remains tender and flavoursome inside; bone-marrow beef fillet is an example of East meets West, which adds a Chinese favourite — beef bone marrow on top of western-style fillet steak. Spice-lovers must try the chilli paste crab, each crab weights almost one kilo and is hand-picked from the market, fresh everyday. Don't just order by the menu at L16, be sure to ask the head chef for the daily specials, because the chef personally buys the fresh produce at the market every day.



1. The expert tea-pourer makes "eight treasure tea" a sight to behold
2. The Laundry Pork
3. The first thing you see — four words "Ba Shu Min Feng"
4. The soup is freshly stewed every day
5. Entrance of Zi Wei Tang restaurant
6. Exotic environment at L16
7. Marrow beef fillet is a marriage of oriental and western tastes
8. The outdoor setting is great for afternoon tea or snacks
9. Top notch food and ambience at L16
10. Tempting dessert plates

Add: 4F, The MIX, Luohu District, Shenzhen Tel: (755) 8269 1616

Opening hours: 10:00-0:00 Getting there: Shenzhen Metro Exit C3, Da Ju Yuan Station

T Teppanyaki Giant Zhong Sen Ming Cai

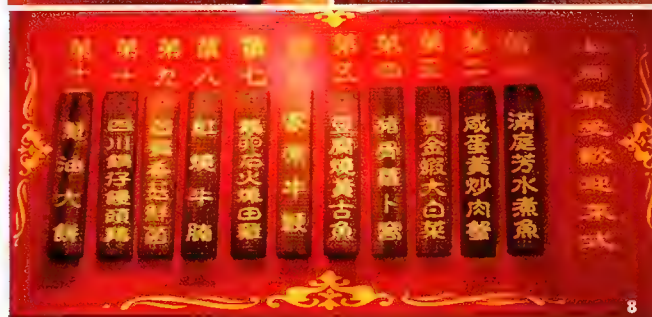
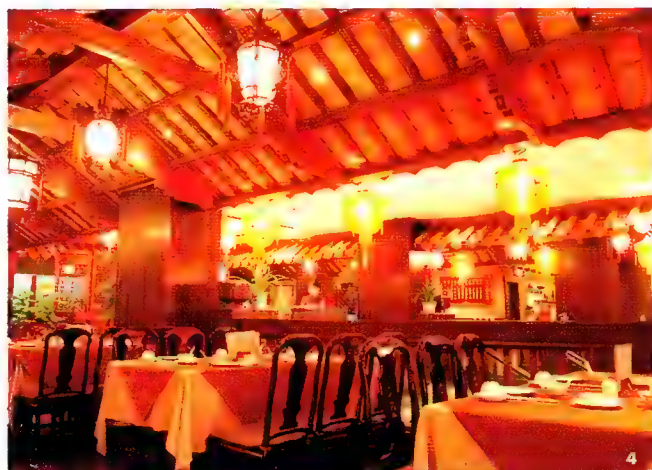
Carrying on its success in Guangzhou, the restaurant continues to shock Shenzhen diners with its exceptional big size. The mammoth eatery takes up some 170,000 square feet of space, with over 130 private dining rooms decorated in various Japanese styles and a sushi bar of 6,000 square feet. It also owns the world's longest teppanyaki bar — at an impressive 22 metres, even the longest teppanyaki bar in Japan (Ginza) is only 12 metres.

Over 600 dishes, combining cuisines of Kanto, Kansei, Akashi, kaseki-ryori as well as the familiar favourites of sushi, sashimi, teppanyaki, hotpot, prepare to be spoilt for choice.

The ultimate taste treat is the Xiaomuwang sashimi platter, which is an enormous version of the traditional Japanese platter, with top-quality tuna, as well as Norwegian salmon, yellow tail, plaice, sea urchin, oysters, arctic shell, red clam, etc.



Add: 2-3/F, World Financial Centre, 4003 Shennan Road East, Luohu District, Shenzhen
Tel: (755) 8266 6688 Opening hours: 11:00-14:45/ 17:00-21:45
Getting there: Shenzhen Metro Exit B of Lao Jie (Old Street) Station



Deluxe Chuan Cuisine Man Ting Fang

Man Ting Fang was a tune's name used to compose Chinese poem, or *ci*, in ancient times. But the three characters also mean a courtyard filled up with aroma. Listening to the *guzheng* (Chinese zither) music, you can picture a scene from any of the Chinese martial arts movies while appreciating the wooden ceilings, traditional rosewood furniture, lanterns and hot Sichuan cuisine.

If you are a master of the Chinese language, the popularity chart which lists the top 11 dishes every week may give you better ideas when ordering food. Here, the writer will recommend Shui Zhu Yu (steamed fish with chilly), fried mushroom in stone hotpot and onion pancakes.

Add: 148 Dongyuan Road, Futian District, Shenzhen Tel: (755) 25941207
Opening hours: 11:00-00:00 Getting there: Shenzhen Metro Exit D, Ke Xue Guan Station

Trusted Name in Hotpot Xiao Fei Yang

In Shenzhen, Xiao Fei Yang's (Small Fat Lamb) prices are only half that of the same chain in Hong Kong. The main dish, lamb, comes from the firm's abattoir in Inner Mongolia, ensures freshness and quality.

What makes Xiao Fei Yang hotpot special is the soup base, which brings out the ingredients' flavours even without condiments. The meat used comes from young lambs of Inner Mongolia to ensure tenderness; while the barbequed lamb chops are cooked with special spices that seal in the meat's own flavour. Don't miss their other specialities, like Mongolian *shiu mai* (meat dumpling) which is served with chilli sauce.

In catering to more health-conscious gourmets, the eatery even introduces some non-meat combinations to take care of the vegetarians.



Add: Intersection of Zhenhua Road and Yunnan Road, Shenzhen
Tel: (755) 8322 1148 Opening hours: 10:00-2:00
Getting there: Shenzhen Metro Exit B, Ke Xue Guan Station

All That Beef Niu Rou Gong Fang



A wonderful dining experience sometimes counts much on the service. And you will find it perfect in Niu Rou Gong Fang (Beef Workshop). For example, while being soaked in the restaurant's western temperament and moody music, you will be served a magazine when you are waiting for friends.

The restaurant's mainstay is the beef hotpot, which offers a pot for everyone — a western twist on an old Chinese staple. The highlight is the silky beef sashimi. This versatility with ingredients and cooking style is what makes Niu Rou Gong Fang one of those places that will always delight the customers.



Translated by Cheng Lei

- 1, 2. The famous Xiaomuwang sashimi
3. The teppanyaki bar is always packed
- 4, 5. Classic design and performance at Man Ting Fang
6. Cooked mushroom in stone pot
7. Steamed fish with chilly
8. Top 11 dishes chart displayed in Man Ting Fang

9. Fresh lamb is freight by air to Shenzhen everyday
10. Xiao Fei Yang's special hotpot soup base
11. Roasted lamb steak
12. Outlook of the Yu Xiang Yuan restaurant
13. A pot for everyone is handy and hygienic
14. Fat beef platter
15. Beef sashimi

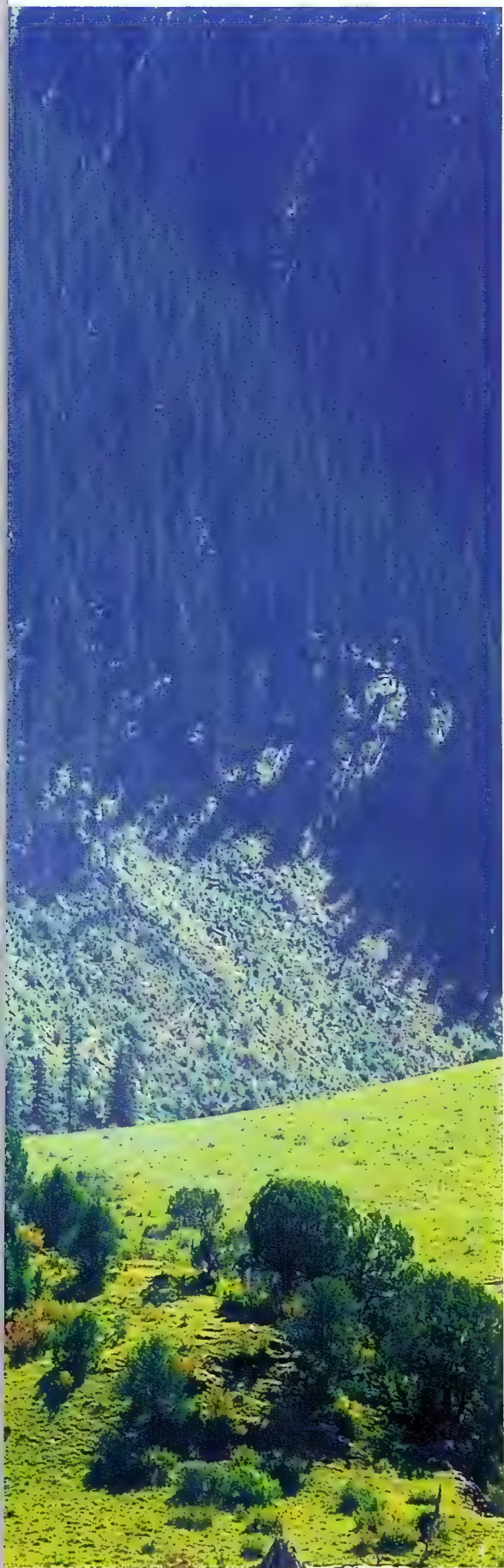
Add: 154 Zhenxing Road, Shenzhen Tel: (755) 8332 2422
Opening hours: 11:00-23:00
Getting there: Shenzhen Metro Exit A, Hua Qiang Lu Station

Visiting Monasteries in Qinghai

Photos & Article · Zhai Dongfeng

In early autumn our party of three hit the road from Beijing, heading to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau along National Highway 109. Riyue (Sun and Moon) Mountain and the Daotanghe River, which are historically associated with the Tang princess Wencheng, who married Songtsan Gambo, King of Tubo (now Tibet), in the seventh century, were soon behind us.





Distribution of Monasteries in Qinghai

Yushu Prefecture

[1] Zeku Monastery Zeku Town

Zeku (Jyegu) Monastery, located on a mountainside in Zeku Town in the Yushu Tibetan Autonomous prefecture, is a pleasant assortment of sutra halls and lama residences. The principal monastery of the Sakya Sect of Tibetan Buddhism as practised by the Zhawu tribe, it is well known for its imposing architecture, great number of lamas, and an extensive collection of religious and cultural relics, as well as for producing many scholars throughout history. Treasures include the *tangka* (a traditional Tibetan painted or embroidered picture) of Sakyamuni presented by Bashpa, teacher and confidential adviser to the Yuan Emperor Kublai Khan in the 13th century, a mask of Bodhisattva Dharmapala, a sandalwood Drolma (female Bodhisattva) statue, a bell and vajra (or dorje in Tibetan, a sacred object representing indestructibility) from ancient India, and a hair ornament once worn by King Gesar. The famous monastery frequently hosted revered guests. At the end of 1937, the Ninth Panchen Lama, Qujie Nima, died here on his way back to Tibet. His stupa stands inside the monastery. The First Living Buddha of Zeku Monastery, Gyana, lived on E'mei Mountain, Wutai Mountain and at other Han-dominated places for over 20 years and was fluent in Chinese. His clothing closely resembled the costume of the Han people, and he was addressed as the "Han Living Buddha".

1. Idyllic Zhiqin Monastery nestled in the mountains of Baima County



[2] Thrangu Monastery Zeku Town

In the afternoon, we arrived at Thrangu Monastery in southwest Zeku Town. Thrangu has a long history, but perhaps the monastery's greatest claim to fame is that Deisongtsinba, the founder of the Khama Geju Sect, once stayed here in the 12th century. The Venerable Traleg Kyabgon, one of the four Great Kyabgons (Protectors) Temple of Princess Wencheng is jointly administered by Thrangu Monastery and Drolma Draktsa.

The current Living Buddha of Thrangu Monastery, Lodro Nyima Rinpoche, is young but scholarly. His believers reside not only within Kanba Tibetan district in Sichuan, but also in Hong Kong, Indonesia and Singapore. When he learned we were from Beijing, he invited us to visit his residence. With his help, we were able to photograph the monastery without difficulty.

Golog Prefecture

[3] Chalang Monastery Darlag County

Leaving Yushu, we drove towards Darlag County in Golog Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, 700 km away. Nestled in a valley 20 km southwest of Darlag County, Chalang Monastery was built in 1895 (the 21st year of the Qing Emperor Guangxu's reign), constructed by Rinchen Pema and Lhundup Gyatso. A winding creek graces the front of the monastery, while mountains rise behind it. A huge sky burial site covers the slope to its right. The monastery is the largest in Darlag County, with 296 monks and over 30 sutra halls. Living Buddha Nyima is the Vice Chairman of the Buddhism Association of Qinghai and a

provincial Political Consultative Conference member. At his home, our hospitable host served us butter tea, *zanba* (roasted barley flour), dried meat and butter rice. I gradually got used to Tibetan food during our trip, though I had some difficulty eating the *zanba* at first, continually getting it all over my hands and face, until I resembled a funny clown. The sweet, delicious food has a strong flavour all its' own.

The Major Sutra Hall at Chalang Monastery was one of the most spectacular such halls we saw on our trip. All four inside walls were covered with niches for sutras and Buddhist statues and, in some parts, embellished with murals. As it was autumn, most of the monks had gone home to help out with the harvests. The 100-strong monks that remained chanted sutras in the hall. A few monks deft at painting were gilding statues from Nepal. The Chalang Monastery is said to house dozens of copper Buddhist statues and stupas acquired from India, Nepal and Tibet in the seventh to eighth centuries when King Trisong Deutsen advocated Buddhism in the kingdom. The lamas that lived in the hall told us that the statues had been passed down from the early years of the "first dissemination" of Buddhism in Tibet (the 11th to 12th centuries) and dated back at least 1,000 years.

[4] Ashimei Monastery Baima County

Heading southeast from Darlag County, over the Mobadong and Huaxiao mountain passes at altitudes over 4,000 metres above sea level, we entered the administration area of Baima County. The county is sandwiched between the Yellow and Yangtze rivers, adjacent to Sichuan Province.



2



4



Ashimei Monastery consists of a few stupas of different styles, constructed of stone and blue brick. The stone stupas were built with coarse-looking stones, but closer examination reveals that these were stacked without any mortar or reinforcing mortises. Weathered over hundreds of years, they are still in good shape. Sun, moon and star motifs symbolizing one of the many heavens in the "Three Realms" (of sensuous desire, form and formlessness) decorate the tops of the stupas. The upper section of each stupa flares out like a canopy in a procession, and their gold colouring indicates holiness. The 13 yellow rings atop the stupas represent the 13 regions of the Tibetan people. The Buddha's eyes (sometimes four pairs) on the stupas, which can be observed from any angle, seem to convey a message: Buddha's eyes perceive the most minute, to discern the ominous and the auspicious.

[5] Zhiqin Monastery Baima County

Travelling south from Baima County and climbing Duoke Mountain, we found ourselves in the ancient forest of Baima. This little-known retreat hides within well-preserved primitive woodland blessed with a temperate climate, ample rainfall and a wide variety of wildlife. We were now approaching Zhiqin Monastery deep in the mountains. First built in 1810, the famous Nyingmapa Sect monastery sits at the borders of Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai. Though architecturally unremarkable, this monastery, cupped in a forested valley by the Duoke River, is known for the more than 1,000 Khenpos (scholars) produced since its founding. Indeed, this was a school of higher education in Tibet proper.

Currently, Zhiqin Monastery is home to just over 90 monks. In addition to its Sutra Hall, Sutra Lecturing Hall, Meditation Hall and Dining Hall, hundreds of residences for the monks lie scattered about the surrounding area. Sangdangbare Stupa was built on a mound encircled by lush forest. Seen from afar, the stupa's Sumeru pedestal suggests a lofty fortress. The vase-like body of the stupa resembles a gigantic wine jar, the most common shape for Buddhist stupas in the Tibetan area.

[6] Rabgya Monastery Maqên County

Northbound from Darlag County, crossing the Xikequ and Dongkequ rivers, we passed over Animaqin Mountain and arrived at Maqên, the seat of Golog Prefecture. Standing 3,670 metres above sea level, Maqên's Rabgya Monastery is 70 km from town. The Yellow River twists westward here from Maqu County of Gansu Province into Qinghai Province. Rabgya Monastery was constructed on the north bank of the river, overlooking Rabgya Township on the opposite bank. Built during Qing Emperor Qianlong's reign (1736—1796), the monastery still has a tablet dedicated by Emperor Qianlong as well as two huge iron cooking pots bestowed in the Qianlong and the Jiaqing (1796—1821) reigns. Though the cooking pots are no longer used, they are proof of the monastery's prosperity at the time and the esteem in which the emperors held it.

Hainan Prefecture

[7] Shizang Monastery Gonghe County

Steering further north from Rabgya, our team

1. A panoramic view of Zeku Monastery in Yushu
2. More than 2.5 billion Mani stones make up the Gyana Mani Stone Mound of Xinzai, Yushu County
3. Abbot Lhundup Nyima Rinpoche of Thrangu Monastery
4. The spectacular Sutra Hall of Chalang Monastery in Darlag County
5. A large number of ancient stupas are preserved in Baima County



entered Hainan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture after scaling Xiqing Mountain. Shizang Monastery lies 70 km from the seat of the prefecture. Legend has it that at the time of the monastery's founding, monks from "Rear Tibet" were relocated here. Translated into Chinese, Rear Tibet becomes "Shizang", hence the monastery's name. We learned that the first abbot, Djampah Gyatso, came from Tashilhunpo Monastery and lectured here. The current abbot, Rixu Living Buddha, who is nearly 70, declined to show us around the complex. Instead, the Director of the Monastery Administration Committee, Gelek, told us about the monastery. Home to 350 monks, Shizang is one of the largest monasteries in Hainan Prefecture, consisting of a Major Sutra Hall, Minor Sutra Hall, Maitreya Palace and Sakyamuni Palace. Inside the Major Sutra Hall is the silver sharipu (relic of the Buddha or high lamas) stupa of the First Pundit. A gilded Sakyamuni statue is also worshipped here. Of particular note, the Fifth Panchen Lama (1663—1737) formulated stringent precepts for the monks here to follow and gave them a "prestigious iron staff" to reinforce those precepts. All of these cultural relics have been well preserved.

[8] Heri Monastery Heri Township

Still on our northward course, we crossed Xiuma Mountain pass and reached Heri Township 20 km to the east via Nanbatan. Heri Monastery, situated nearby in one of the valleys east of the seat of the township, is a Nyingmapa monastery. A statue of Tibetan Buddhism patriarch Baimasambhava is worshipped here. At the rear of the monastery on a slope more than 3,500 metres above sea level stood a stone sutra wall five metres wide and 200 metres



long. The wall is well known. Apparently, in 1831 when the monastery was built, the sutra wall was formed from stacked stones inscribed with Buddhist sutras, calendars, astronomical symbols, medicine knowledge and dotted with Buddhist niches, with generations of monks adding to and strengthening it for over 100 years. The monastery's stone-carvers, though aged, continue to inscribe stone sutra and fashion Buddhist statues into the wall.

Haidong Region

[9] Wendu Monastery Xunhua County

With Wutun Monastery at our backs, we turned from Bao'an towards the Haidong region. Eventually we arrived at Wendu Monastery in Xunhua County. The monastery was the birthplace of the 10th Panchen Lama (1938—1989). As the monks had returned home to help harvest crops, most of the halls and the palaces were closed. Only the stupa hall of the 10th Panchen Lama was open. Inside, the seven-metre high stupa of the Panchen Lama, embedded with sparkling jewels, is worshipped.

[10] Xiaqiong Monastery Hualong County

By the time we arrived at Hualong County at 9 p.m., we were all starving. Finding food became our top priority. At one restaurant, we were told mutton, the most common meat in the area, was 20 yuan per jin (slightly more than a pound), which made no sense to us. When our local companion enquired in Tibetan, the price was lowered to eight yuan. We knew that the closer we were to the capital, Xining, the higher the prices would be, but we simply could not agree to



such overpriced food.

Xiaqiong Monastery, in northwest Hualong County, resembles a soaring eagle when viewed from a distance. The Sutra Hall, monks' residences and stupas are constructed on an incredibly steep slope, prompting the nickname "Xiaqiong Rock". Though the buildings seem to defy gravity, seeing is believing. The monastery perches above the Yellow River, at more than 3,000 metres above sea level. Just a few hundred kilometres downstream, seemingly at odds with this ancient place, the Lijiaxia and Liujiaxia hydraulic power plants generate energy for huge power systems.

[11] Nanzong Nunnery Jiazha County

To reach Nanzong Nunnery in Jiazha County from Xiaqiong Monastery, we needed to go back to Hualong County, a detour of about 80 km. However, our vehicle was stranded when we just saw Nanzong Nunnery in view.

Leaving the jeep behind, we walked for about a kilometre before we caught sight of the ancient temple hidden in the valley. It was different from anything we'd seen before and consisted of three sections: the Yellow Temple, Red Temple and Nunnery. The Nunnery houses the Major Sutra Hall, Avalokitesvara Palace and residences. Currently, 150 nuns, most from Qinghai, live here. When we finished photographing the temple, we were led by two nuns in charge of chopping wood towards the top of the mountain. The terrain was like the reddish Danxia landform in southern China. Seen from the mountain top, the temple complex at the foot forms a painting of great charm and simplicity, sharp colours and meaningful symbols — the Buddhist banners, stupas,



gurgling creek, vermilion walls and blue-glazed tiles were animated by one or two nuns carrying water.

After saying goodbye to Nanzong Nunnery, we returned by the same road. We reached the national highway by early afternoon. From there it was a quick trip to Zhaitan Monastery in Ledu County.

[12] Zhaitan Monastery Ledu County

Zhaitan Monastery was built during Ming Emperor Hongwu's reign (1368—1398). At the request of the Samdhub Lama, the first Ming emperor Zhu Yuanzhang bestowed a tablet bearing the name of the monastery, *Zhaitan* (Zhai, meaning Gotama in Chinese, is the surname and respectful address of Buddha, founder of Buddhism). Zhaitan Monastery is the embodiment of Han-Tibet co-operation. The monastery has a large collection of rare cultural relics and stele records, tablets, seals, stone carvings and murals presented by various emperors. The famous wooden "Long Live the Emperor" tablet is kept in Longguo Hall.

One of the most architecturally important aspects of Zhaitan Monastery is its murals, which cover more than 400 square metres. The content of the murals tells the life story of Sakyamuni, from birth to nirvana of the Buddha. Created from natural ore-based paints, the murals, which have lasted for more than half a millennia, still captivate us with their brilliance.

As Zhaitan Monastery was the last stop on our itinerary, our journey, filled as it had been with hardships and hazards, sadly came to an end. We returned to Xining at dusk. After I found a hostel and checked in, I was left with less than 10 yuan in my pocket. 

Translated by Barry Zhang

1. The silver sharipu stupa of the First Pundit worshipped inside the Major Sutra Hall at Shizang Monastery
2. A monk painting tangka in a monastery of Huangnan Prefecture
3. The stone sutra wall at Heri Monastery in is well known among Tibetans
4. The wooden "Long Live the Emperor" tablet at Zhaitan Monastery

■ HIGHLIGHTS

A Showcase of Hot Springs in Guangdong

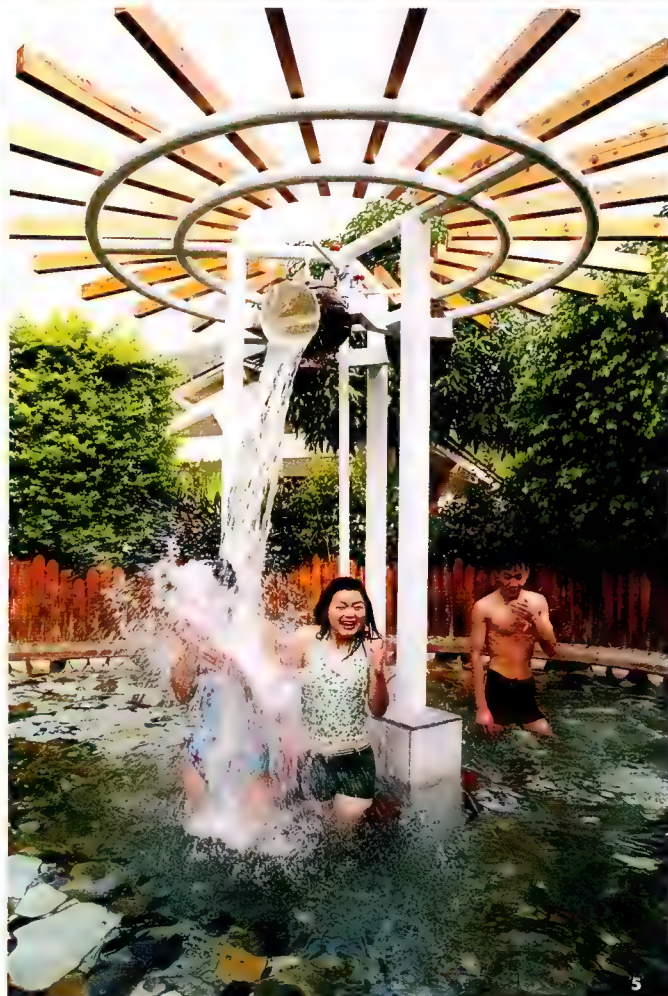
Photos & Article • CTP Editorial Team

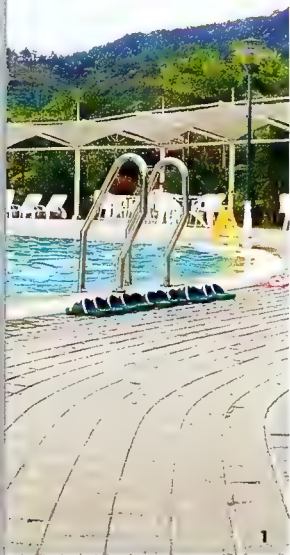
Why just think of Japan or Taiwan when you dream of going for a hot spring bath? Actually, hot springs in Guangdong Province — modern, classical, and famous of excellent service or charming scenery — you name it and there will be one that suits you! Our reporters have just explored some of them recently...





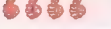
Bishui Bay Extra Delights Besides Hot Spring





Bishui Bay tells us that one can also enjoy foot massage, Karaoke, and watching fire-blasting shows while soaking in the hot spring. The world of hot spring is far richer than expected.

Editor's Remarks

Greenery Index: 
Air Freshness Index: 
Uniqueness (outdoor hot spring): 
Uniqueness (indoor hot spring): 

(Full score: 5 )

Biggest Attractions

1. A feast of hot springs

There are 28 outdoor hot springs — each with unique functions and characteristics. The editor likes the wine pool set in mild temperature. In the pool, beads of rice wine drip into the pool from the wine barrel hung on the roof. When the rice wine evaporates into vapour, its aroma permeates the whole area. Another delight is the mint pool, one of the four special flavoured pools. The contrast of hot water and cool mint creates an unusual harmony.

2. Full course of entertainment

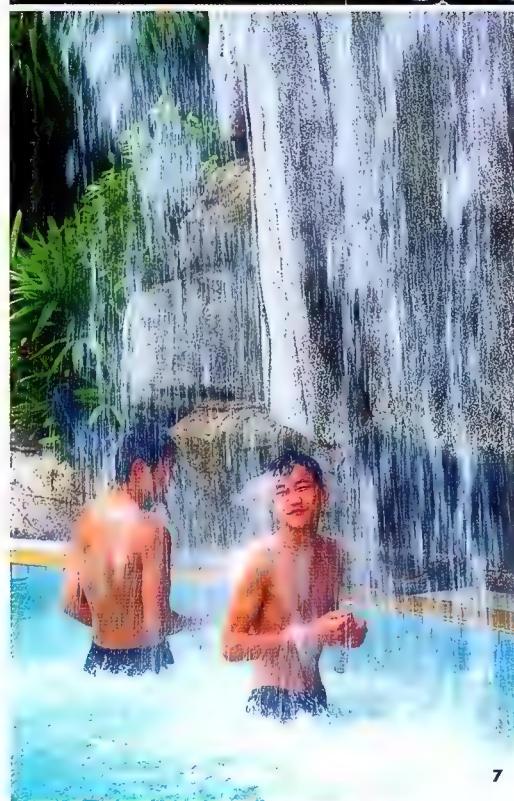
Bishui Bay prides itself on its well-blended entertainment offered to customers. The full course includes — a kids' pool, a cobblestone road for foot massage, a foot massage pool, and also a special pool for aqua therapy. More, in between the kids' pool and swimming pool is a stage for ethnic shows, performed thrice a day. The highlight is a fire blasting show, offering a burning indigenous sensation for audience while they are soaking in water still.

3. All-rounded services

When you are taking a nap on the chair, the waitress will cover you with a blanket and bring you drinks. Simply by waving your hand, a foot-massager will come over. Bishui Bay believes that customers also come first. They offer no tip services indeed. The drinks and snacks offered in the hot spring area incur no extra cost.

Tips for Hot Spring Bathing:

1. Start with hot springs with lower temperature first. Use your feet to test the temperature, and splash some water with hands on your upper body to help you get used to the water.
2. Each bath should be less than 15 minutes. Come out of the pool and rest awhile before going back in.
3. After enjoying the hot spring, simply rinse your body with water. Avoid using soap.



Previous page:

Three concerts are offered in Bishui Bay each day. Both performers and audience enjoy greatly

1. There is an enormous swimming pool for visitors to enjoy
2. A barrel is hung over the rice wine pool. Nice wine drips drop by drop into the pool
3. The kids' pool is the all time favourite for children
4. Petals of roses cluster all over the pool
5. OK barrel brings water that is sometimes cool and sometimes hot
6. The secluded coffee pool is the favourite of lovebirds
7. Cool water streams along the man-made waterfall. Probably only boys dare to give it a try

Travel Tips

Dining Chinese and Western-style restaurants, cafes and bars can be found in the villa. Two delicacies you should not miss: the Conghua beancurd and wild vegetables grown from the scenic area farms.

Accommodation Room rate starts at 880 yuan a night, including hot spring bath.

Transportation Take public bus number 601 from Guangzhou bus terminal; or take bus number 602 from Tianhedongpu bus terminal. Get off at Conghua bus stop and change another bus that heads to Liangkou (over 200 buses each day).

Add: Liuxi Hot Spring Resort, Chonghua City, Guangzhou

Tel: (20) 8784 2888

Website: www.bishuiwan.com

Opening hours: 09:00–01:00

Admission: 108 yuan

Conghua Hot Spring Hotel Royal Imperial Hot Spring



Promenaded beneath a well-shaded green path and engulfed in a bamboo forest, the Conghua Hot Spring Hotel impresses one with its poetic and natural image.

Editor's Remarks

Greenery Index:	🌿🌿🌿🌿🌿
Air Freshness Index:	🌿🌿🌿🌿🌿
Uniqueness (outdoor hot spring):	🌿🌿🌿🌿🌿
Uniqueness (indoor hot spring):	🌿🌿🌿🌿🌿

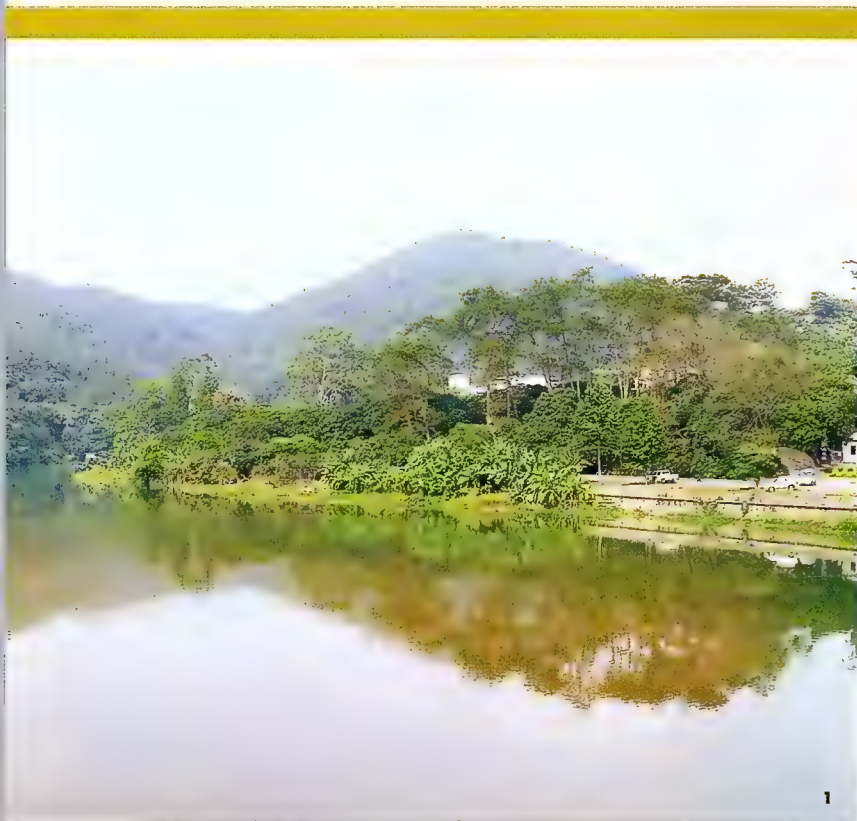
Biggest Attractions

1. Exclusive service

The Hot Spring Hotel is the oldest brand of its kind in Conghua, which is the imperial place to receive important visitors for the Guangdong Province. Many national leaders have paid their visits there, including Chairman Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and Liu Shaoqi, as well as the Former US President Richard Nixon. Very few rooms are open to public indeed.

2. Embraced by sublime nature

The hot spring does not have to launch any artificial green program for it is located amidst century-old trees, numerous streams, and a bamboo forest. The sublime nature leaves no room for any artificial embellishment. The Liuxihe National Forest Park is right inside the scenic area of this hot spring hotel.



3. Seclusive environment

Being the earliest-built hot spring in Conghua area, Hot Spring Hotel has occupied the most secluded and tranquil environment. The scenic area is built alongside running streams with the Bilang Bridge separating the bustling town and the tranquil resort. Before reaching the hotel in the scenic area, you need to drive through a tunnel created by natural bamboo.

The Pine Garden Number 1

Pine Garden Number 1 is the guest room for the chief of state. It is not open to the public. A pair of wooden sculptures from Chaozhou and Shantou is a masterpiece. The rosewood furniture and antique paintings under the dim light are a pure form of art. All these bring you right back to the movies of the 1930s ~ 40s.



Travel Tips

Dining Taoran Restaurant (Guangdong Cuisine)

Specialties: Liuxi fish (river fish) and pumpkin cake

Accommodation Pine Garden Area: Standard room: 530 yuan

Lake Area: Standard room: 530 yuan; Deluxe Suite: 780 yuan

Creek Area: Standard room: 480 yuan; Deluxe Suite: 800 yuan (or more)

Orchid Area: Deluxe room: 630 yuan (or more)

Transportation Take bus number 601 from Guangzhou bus terminal; or take bus number 602 from Tianhedongpu bus terminal. Take a taxi from there to Hot Spring Hotel. If you come with a few friends, you can share a taxi from Guangzhou to go to the hotel. It costs about 200 yuan. stop and change another bus that heads to Liangkou (over 200 buses each day).

Add: 80 Zhendong Road, Hot Spring Township, Conghua, Guangdong

Tel: (20) 8783 0888 - 8268

Website: www.gdwq.gov.cn

Opening hours: 08:00-23:00

Admission: The indoor hot spring in Green Creek (Juxi) room is 30 yuan. The outdoor hot springs in Orchid area (Lanyuan) have different charges, according to the size of the pools.

1. The Conghua Hot Spring Hotel is located aside the Liuxihe River
2. A private hot spring offers absolute solitude and tranquility
3. Indoor hot spring pool provides a warm and nice environment
4. The First Lady's room is decorated elegantly
5. A table used by Liu Shaoqi is placed in Pine Garden Number 1
6. The exterior of Pine Garden Number 1



Jinjiang Hot Spring Full of Vitality



Jinjiang Hot Spring in Anping town offers not only a unique outdoor hot spring, but also thrilling water rafting and wave surfing activities. More, there are romantic wooden huts for newly-weds to enjoy their honeymoon and take wedding photos.

Editor's Remarks

Greenery Index:	🌳🌳🌳🌳
Air Freshness Index:	🌬️🌬️🌬️🌬️
Uniqueness (outdoor hot spring):	🔥🔥🔥🔥
Uniqueness (indoor hot spring):	🔥🔥🔥🔥

Biggest Attractions

1. Ultimate vitality

To spice up the sedating hot spring bath, Jinjiang combines surfing and water rafting with hot spring bath, first of its kind in the nation. At scheduled time, 1.5-metre-high waves are created in the hot spring pool. The strength of the waves makes you feel like in ocean indeed. Even if you sit on the shore, enormous waves will keep you in excitement. If you want to go further into this thrilling sensation, try water rafting. You can meander in the snaking circular pool for couple minutes. Do notice that both surfing and rafting are

scheduled. After a period of excitement, you can relax a bit in the hot spring. There are also special massage on pressure points, and ultra sound Jacuzzi massage.

2. Supreme privacy

Inside the wooden huts in the hot spring area lies the "private hot spring." The wooden huts are perfect for couples. In front of every wooden hut is a private hot spring, open only to the guests of the hut. It offers supreme privacy to the couples. The water of the hot spring is changed everyday. The aroma of cassia blossoms as well as verdant conditions makes a perfect atmosphere indeed.

3. Diversified facilities

Apart from its vitality, Jinjiang is known for other facilities. In the Longevity Garden, you can find special hot spring pools that offer medical functions. The Aromatic Spa Gallery offers different oil essence for you to choose: eucalyptus leaf, green tea, green bamboo, rose, and lavender. The hot spring area is very well structured with clear instructions.



1. Surfing in hot spring is full of spirit
2. The exciting water rafting (by Jinjiang Hot Spring)
3. Massage is a must other than hot spring bath
4. The private hot spring outside the wooden hut
5. Jinjiang Hot Spring is a great place for taking wedding pictures
6. Warm & Cool Waterfall Pond

A hot spring more than three special honours

According to Mr. Li Binggang, GM of Jinjiang Hot Spring, the amount of ferro silicon, fluorine, and radon in Jinjiang Hot Spring has reached the international standard that guarantees high medical values.

Business Talk in Hot Spring

"Don't think the best way to enjoy hot spring is to have your eyes closed," Mr. Li says, "because in the hot spring, while you feel relaxed and free, you may easily close the most difficult business deal." It seems that talking business over hot spring bath is a great thing.

Future development

55 hot spring pools of various size, surfing and



Travel Tips

Dining Jinjiang Restaurant (Chinese cuisine). There are also western restaurants and pubs. Specialties: Jiajiang Fengsha Chicken, Little Bowl Cake, and Young Taro Hotpot.

Accommodation Wooden Hut Villa: 988 yuan per night.

Guest room in the hot spring: Standard Room: 518 yuan per night.

European Villa: 518~5,988 yuan per night.

Transportation (from Hong Kong)

Direct Bus: Take the bus from MacPherson Football Pitch on Nelson Street, Mongkok. Change shuttle bus from Anpinghu Hotel to Jinjiang Hot Spring. The ticket costs HK\$130, and takes 5 hours (Contact number: 852-2391 1192)

Anping to Jinjiang Hot Spring

Anping Eryun bus terminal has free shuttle bus to go to Jinjiang. The schedules are as follows: 08:30, 11:20, 13:30, 15:30, 17:30 and 19:20.

Other services:

Japanese massage (60 yuan), Chinese Massage (60 yuan), Thai Massage (60 yuan). Karaoke, tennis court and football pitch are available as well.

Add: Daitian Township, Anping City

Tel: (75) 7333 333

Website: www.jjwq.com

Opening hours: 07:00~02:00

Admission: 99 yuan

rafting activities — are much enjoyed by the public. Since there is still much room for Jinjiang to expand and develop, more activities are yet to come. For instance, the Wolf Tooth Hill behind the hot spring is good for creating hiking tracks. Jinjiang River in front of the hot spring resort is great for water sports in summer.



Didu Hot Spring Walking into Chinese Painting



The essence of Didu Hot Spring is its harmonious integration into nature — the sublimation of Chinese mountains and water.

Biggest Attractions

1. Devouring the natural beauty of mountains and water

Didu Hot Spring is integrated perfectly into nature. Jiuchongtian Waterfall is the highlight of all. It is a hot spring built in nine steps along the slope where you have to climb up through the stairs. Stooping down from the highest point, you find the scenery breathtaking. Scattering in the hot spring region are Hetu Yuan, the 12 Zodiacs Pool, Yinyang Pool. Hetu Yuan is situated and shaped according to the Study of the Eight Diagrams; the 12 Zodiacs Pool offers 12 pools based on the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiacs; the Yinyang Pool is a pool combining geothermal hot water and cold water. All these pools are the supreme creation based on Chinese nature and culture. The scenic region is indeed full of Chinese cultural characteristics: Jade Pool, Phoenix Pool, Phoenix Building, Flower Fruit Hill, Water Blinds — all have its origin traced in history.

1. The River Painting Garden (by Didu Hot Spring)
2. Yinyang Pool combines both geothermal spring water and cold water (by Didu Hot Spring)
3. The 12 Zodiacs Pool reflects the essence of Chinese culture (by Didu Hot Spring)

2. A silky smooth hot spring

Didu is also known as "Smooth Hot Spring". Having soaked there, you find your skin silky smooth indeed. It is because the hot spring here contains over 20 minerals that are beneficial to our body. The water is pure and transparent — a rare and valuable smooth hot spring.

Editor's Remarks

Greenery Index:	🌿🌿🌿🌿
Air Freshness Index:	🌿🌿🌿🌿
Uniqueness (outdoor hot spring):	🌿🌿🌿🌿
Uniqueness (indoor hot spring):	🌿🌿🌿🌿

Travel Tips

Dining Phoenix Court Restaurant

Specialties: Yellow Eel Baked in Rice and Didu Intestines.

Accommodation There are different residences for guests in the hot spring, namely, Yushi Palace, Qinghua Palace, Fengchi Palace and Baochun Parlor. Yushi Palace (Deluxe One-bed room) 600 yuan per room; Fengchi Palace (Deluxe Double) 500 yuan per room; Baochun Parlor (Deluxe Double) 600 yuan per room. You can also choose to rent a Complex, Three-person Suite or the Executive Deluxe Suite. The price ranges from 600~9,800 yuan.

Transportation (from Hong Kong)

Direct bus: From Hong Kong to Anping Bus Terminal (Contact number: 852-2317 7900)

Free shuttle bus to Didu Hot Spring is available at Anping. Please check it at Didu Hot Spring Information desk at Anping. The shuttle bus leaves every 45 minutes and the ride takes about 20 minutes.

Other services:

Beauty treatment offered at the hot spring region: Head massage (30 yuan); nail polishing (30 yuan); Chinese Tuina (massage) (80 yuan for every 45 minutes). Other entertainments include fishing, basketball, snooker and karaoke.

Add: Liangxi Township, Anping City

Tel: (750) 7396 378

Website: www.diduhotspring.com

Opening hours: 07:00~02:00

Admission: 80 yuan (Outdoor hot spring); 150 yuan (Deluxe indoor hot spring)



Hot Spring Park Dive in Japanese Sensation



Breath-taking environment, tailor-made services and extravagant style — are great attractions for hot spring; however, such hot springs may be packed with visitors. Though not very spacious, Wenquan Leyuan (Hot Spring Park) is comfortable and calm. If you want to be away from the crowd and enjoy your hot spring bath in quietness, this place will be a good choice.

Editor's Remarks

Greenery Index: 
Air Freshness Index: 
Uniqueness (outdoor hot spring): 

Biggest Attractions

1. Tiny and dainty

A number of 33 hot springs in the Hot Spring Park cluster together. Known for its Japanese sentiment, the decorations of the hot spring are delicate and the environment very green. Straw-built wooden pavilion provides wondering shade and makes you feel like being in Japan. There is a line of unique pools catering for couples. Though just a handful, they are very dainty and perfect for lovebirds. Other special pools include coffee pool, sandalwood pool, wine spring pool, perfume pool and aromatic tea pool, etc. Comparing to other large-scale hot spring resorts, this place is more tranquil. If you want to avoid big crowd, try this place.

2. Mineral mud for beauty and body treatment

Hot Spring Park is known for the mineral mud from



Anzhou special stone, which is a natural sedimentary rock with multiple functions. This mineral mud can be used to burn out body fat, facilitate perspiration in order to help people lose weight and keep fit. The negative ions and elementary minerals in the special stone can infiltrate the skin easily so as to moisturize and nourish the skin. As such, the skin will become soft and white, and is suitable for ladies to try. Anzhou special stone mud costs 60 yuan per bag.

Travel Tips

Dining Jinquan Restaurant (Chinese cuisine)

Specialties: Chicken baked in mud

Accommodation It offers standard suite as well as European-style villas

Standard suite: 480 yuan per room

Villa for couples: 380 yuan per room

Biquan Villa: 480 yuan per room (for couples)

Transportation (from Hong Kong)

Direct Bus: From Hong Kong to Anping Bus Terminal (Contact number: 852-2317 7900). At Anping Bus terminal, get on the bus that goes to Naji Township or Jinshan Hot Spring, which passes Hot Spring Park. The bus fare is 4 yuan and the ride takes 30 minutes.

Add: Naji Town, Anping City

Tel: (750) 7281 448

Website: www.le-yuan.com

Opening hours: 07:00-01:00

Admission: 60 yuan (flat rate throughout the week)



1. The hot spring is well shaded by straw scaffolding and wooden pavilion
2. Taking a hot spring bath with a few friends is a great treat
3. The villas in the hot spring are of European style and merge so well with the surrounding
4. There are not many hot springs, but they are all dainty and delicate

Gudou Hot Spring Resort Modern Huaqing Pool



Everyone who has visited Gudou Hot Spring in Xinhui all describes it as “Modern Huaqing Pool”. If the water can reach the quality of Huaqing pool, it should be of sound guarantee. Yet, what really matters is how to enjoy a comfortable hot spring bath. Clean water, nice scenery and good services — are just the basic requirements. The unique style of Gudou hot spring is indeed the reason to keep you there.

Editor's Remarks

Greenery Index:	🌿🌿🌿🌿
Air Freshness Index:	🌿🌿🌿🌿
Uniqueness (outdoor hot spring):	🌿🌿🌿
Uniqueness (indoor hot spring):	🌿🌿🌿

Biggest Attractions

1. Unique scenery

At Gudou, you cannot be unaffected by the scenery. The traditional Tang Palace, the Roman

Pantheon and the Japanese Parlor are all have striking different styles. Such architecture brings a special charm. Numerous pavilions, buildings and parlors in the hot spring region are surrounded by hills and water. The editor particularly likes Shanquan swimming area, located not far from the hot spring valley. Beams of sunray cast upon the crescent beach. The running water makes rowing boats and sailing a perfect delight.

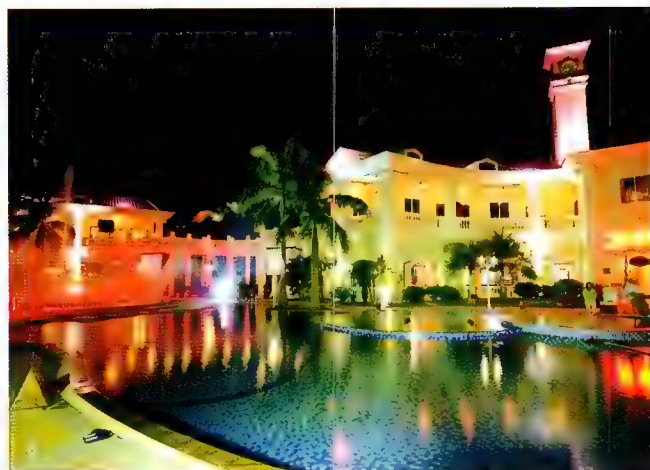
2. 100% tailor-made services

Before dipping into the hot spring, you will come across the note in your room: "Towels are available at the hot spring; you don't have to bring your own". Slippers and towels will all be prepared in the changing room in the hot spring area. More, there are lockers to use. Staff members keep collecting towels used by customers to make the environment as comfortable as possible. The most impressive service indeed is provided three minutes right after you get into the hot spring — a drink!

3. Extravagant accommodation

Countless rooms are available for the guests to choose. The new wing of the hotel though bit far from the hot springs, actually just takes couple minutes by bus. The little balcony of each room allows you a breath-taking lake view. The villas in the hot spring island are another surprise to guests. You can choose the deluxe room and suite, as well as the villa with private hot spring pool. Such charm is incomparable.

1. Traditional architecture of Tang Palace (provided by Gudou Hot spring)
2. A panoramic view from the Japanese Parlor is extraordinary
3. Roman Pantheon (provided by Gudou Hot Spring)
4. The natural environment with hills and stream is soul-soothing



The Tang Palace and soaked in Tang Dynasty style or Japanese flavour. The surrounding and accommodation make your stay an exceptional unique experience.

Travel Tips

Dining Delicious Food Valley; Shuiming House; Lakeview Food Street and Lakeview restaurant

Accommodation New wing of hotel: 680~1,480 yuan; Villa in hot spring island: 880~5,880 yuan; Hot spring valley (Tang Palace VIP room): 3,680~4,880 yuan; Japanese Parlor Suite: 1,080~8,800 yuan

Transportation Take ferry from China Hongkong City ferry terminal to Doumeng ferry pier. Shuttle bus from there takes you to Gudou Hot Spring. The whole trip takes about 3 hours.

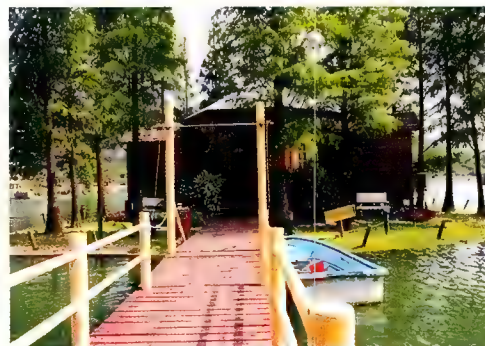
Entrance fees: 998 yuan (for two people)

Tel: 852-2369 1919

Other services:

Massage 128 yuan (Standard room); 168 yuan (Deluxe room); foot massage 38 yuan

Other entertainments include barbeque, cycling, boat-riding and rowing.



Add: Gudou Hot spring Resort, Yunnan, Xinhui District, Jiangmen City

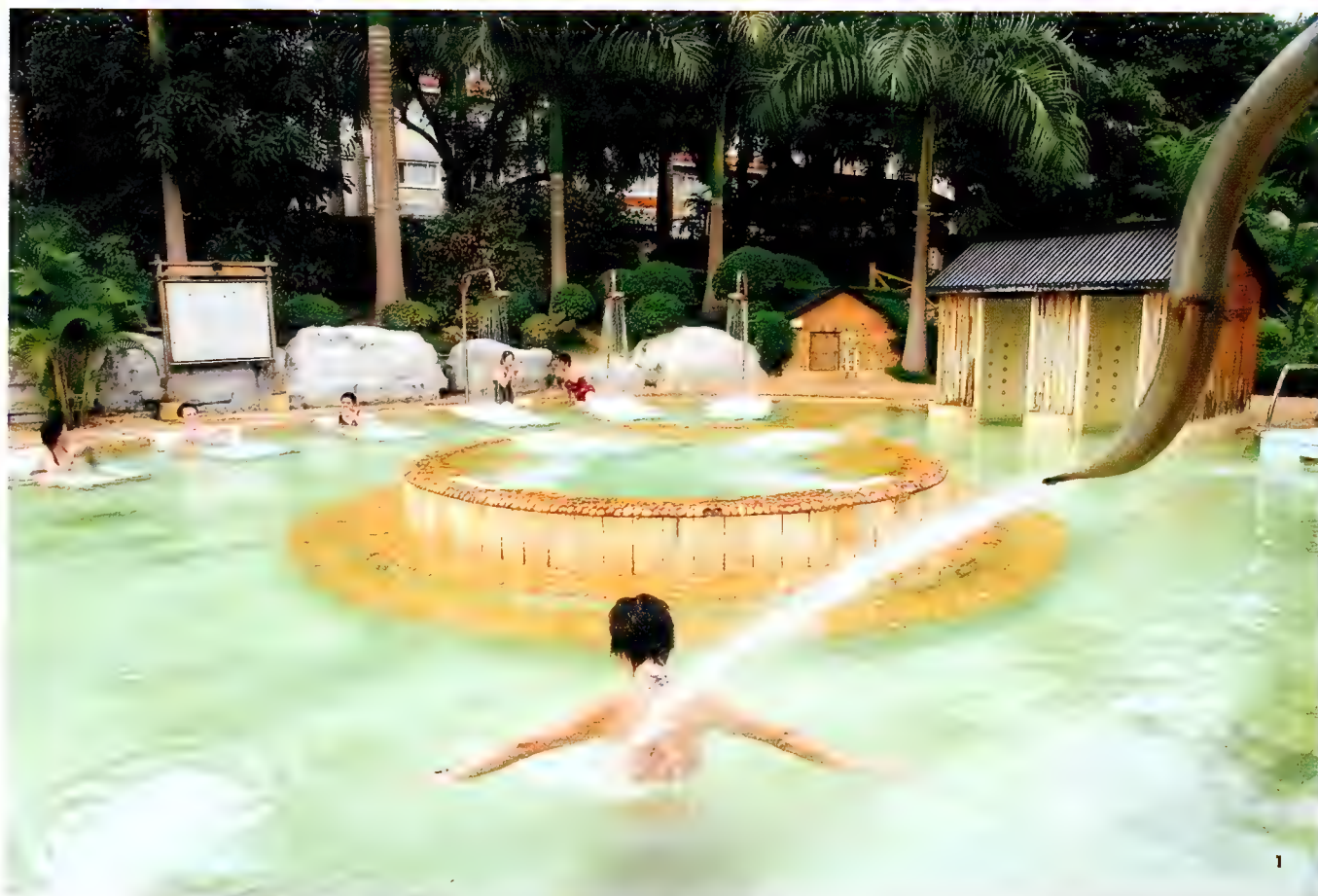
Tel: (750) 6452 222

Website: www.gudou.com

Opening hours: 10:00~00:00



Zhongshan Xian Mu Yuan A Weekend Escape



Even for the sake of health, taking two days off amidst the hectic schedule is a luxury for the hardworking Hong Kongers. As such, the place to rest has to be tranquil and convenient. It is a blessing that in Zhongshan, only two hours from Hong Kong, there is a hot spring called Xianmuyuan, also dubbed "The Best Hot Spring Resort in China."

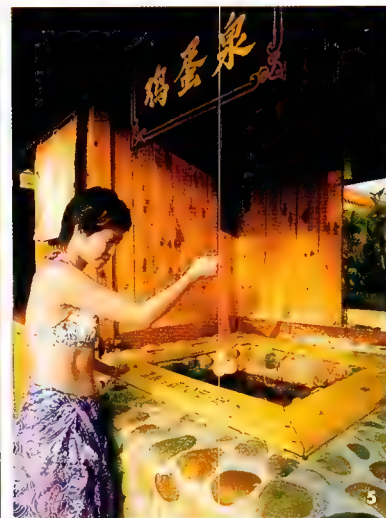
Editor's Remarks

Greenery Index:	🌿🌿🌿🌿
Air Freshness Index:	🌿🌿🌿🌿
Uniqueness (outdoor hot spring):	🌿🌿🌿🌿🌿
Uniqueness (indoor hot spring):	🌿🌿

Biggest Attractions

1. Aroma permeating in the flower garden

Situated in Sanxiang Town of Zhongshan city, Xianmuyuan is regarded the big brother for hot spring resorts in Guangdong. Fauna and flora surround the 66-acre hot spring region. Though bordered by a bustling city, you feel no pressure from the city at all when in the hot spring. Even promenading in the area on bare foot makes you totally relaxed.



2. Countless pools to soak into

One should never stay too long in a hot spring. With 38 hot springs of different functions and styles, Xiangmuyuan makes your each dip in the water even swifter. Milk, coffee, danggui, jinseng, lingzhi, rose, mint, and aloe are not names for special drinks, but names for different sodium chloride hot springs. The water contains minerals like chloride, sodium, calcium, and magnesium. They are especially good for chronic neuritis, diabetics, and sickness in digestive system. If you wonder what the "taste" is like, you need to try it out yourself.

3. New ideas for longevity

Xianmuyuan has created innovative programs for prolonging life. "Stone Hot Spring" is a place where the ground has been heated by hot spring water. Guests can lay or sit on the surface. It is believed that such exercise can lessen sciatic nerve pain, and heal arthritis and rheumatism. "Geothermal zone" and "Hot Sand Bath" are special services. The former is partial or whole body massage on geothermal heat. Far from penny-pinching, tourists often cannot help indulging in such great pleasure. The latter requires you to be buried in 40°C-heated sand. The 15-minute treatment is not less challenging than the visit to the inferno of Dante.



1. Aqua-therapeutic Spa combines hot spring, fitness centre, massage and aromatherapy all together
2. Hot spring bath at night offers a unique atmosphere
3. Massage on the geothermal zone is a true delight
4. The green design in the garden and the numerous hot springs make it an ideal for relaxation
5. There is an egg spring in the hot spring region, 10 yuan per an egg
6. Aromatherapy added to the hot sand bath helps blood circulation

Add: Zhongshan Hot Spring Tourist District, Sanxiang Town, Zhongshan City
Tel: (760) 6323 883

Website: www.xmywq.com

Opening hours: 08:30-01:00

Admission: 108 yuan (no time limit); Hot Sand Bath 10 yuan per 15 minutes; Massage yuan 38 per item; whole body massage: 144 yuan. A "Dark Mud Life Treatment House" will be opened end of 2005, the first of its kind in Guangdong Province.

Travel Tips

Dining Next to Cuihu Resort is Zhanyuan Food Market. Many Chinese cuisines can be found; I highly recommend "Sanxiang Rice Noodles" at Hot Spring Restaurant. It is rich, smooth, delicious and inexpensive (10 yuan per bowl).

Accommodation Cuihu Resort is about 20 minutes of bus ride from the hot spring region. The little villas in the resort are quiet and comfortable, and offer lake view and forest view.

Transportation From Hong Kong to Zhongshan, the most convenient way is to take ferry to Zhongshan from HK-Macau Ferry Pier or China-Hong Kong Ferry. Duration: 1 hour and 40 minutes; fare: HK\$362. Once you arrive Zhongshan Ferry Pier, there is shuttle bus that takes you to Cuihu Resort. The Resort offers free shuttle bus to take guests to the hot spring region, the Rafting Park, and Zhongshan Ferry Pier.

*Zhongshan Xianmuyuan Package tour (for two): 598 yuan/ 698 yuan (Weekdays/ Holidays) (The package includes one-night Standard Room for Two, with breakfast and dinner, tickets to the hot spring region and Cuizhulin Rafting Park and free shuttle bus)

Zhuhai Imperial Hot Spring Resort

It contains over 30 hot springs, such as flora pool, wine pool, jinseng pool, etc, which provide different functions. To merge with the Japanese design, the four-star hotel is built in the hot spring region called Yuyingzhuang Hotel. Decorated with Japanese tatami, the room also spices up its Japanese fragrance by providing kimonos and getao (wooden slippers).



Add: Doumeng, Zhuhai City
Tel: (756)5797 128
Website: www.imperial-hot-spring.com
Opening hours: 24 hours
Admission: 12 yuan (Hot Spring Valley)



Conghua Xian Mu Yuan

Chonghua muyuan is one of the rare well-known hot springs in China. The hot spring water seeps from the riverbed, and reaches 73°C. It contains more than 20 kinds of minerals and elements including radon. The water is crystal clear. As such, it is named "Lingnan Number One Hot Spring". The 38-acre hot spring resort has put health treatment, hot spring bath, surfing, swimming and aqua therapy all together. There are large-scale cool-and-warm spring and surfing pool, Japanese style zone, Chinese herbal pool, romantic hot stream, slides and hot spring swimming pool — a total of nearly 30 pools.

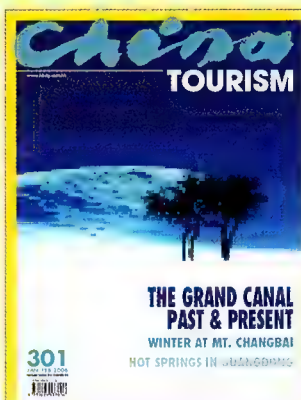


Jinshan Hot Spring

Jinshan Hot Spring can be regarded as the top in Asia. The source of the hot spring is closest to the ground, and it has not been artificially dug or transferred. There are more than 300 outdoor hot spring sources. The average temperature of the water is around 80°C, and the flow of current is about 2,600 square metres per day. Vapour surrounds the region throughout the year and you feel like being in a fairyland. Since the water contains more than 48 different kinds of minerals that are beneficial to our body, this hot spring is regarded as a role model of Guangdong hot springs in terms of its water quality, its current and its temperature.

Add: Naji Township (by the river), Anping City
Tel: (750)7281188
Website: www.jinshanhotspring.com
Opening hours: 06:00~01:00 (for accommodation); 08:00~01:00 (for bath)
Admission: 80 yuan in the hot spring region

Add: 80 Hot Spring Stream East Road, Wenquan Township, Chonghua City, Guangzhou
Tel: (20) 8783 9318



Readership Survey

China Tourism always appreciates feedback from its readers. We are always hungry for your opinions, including criticisms and suggestions. And they are invaluable source for us to improve the magazine. Please take a couple of minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to us. Thank you!

Please give your evaluation of the stories in this issue and your overall impression of *China Tourism*.

		Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Feature:	Grand Canal Past & Present	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Highlights:	Hot Springs in Guangdong	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
New Attractions:	Space Adventures in JSLC	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
On the Way:	Monasteries in Qinghai	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nature:	Discovering Turtle Bay	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Photographs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cover	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Articles	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Travel Tips	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Art Design	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other Opinions:					

Name: (Mr./Ms./Mrs.)

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 Occupation:

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- ☐ Subscription ☐ Newsstand or bookstore
- ☐ Hotel Name:

 ☐ Others

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- ☐ Planning trips ☐ General interest in China's customs, scenery, etc. ☐ Business
- ☐ Tourist Trade purposes ☐ Others

What do you like most about *China Tourism*?

Are you happy with the factual content of *China Tourism*? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What are your suggestions for improvement?

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. It provides us with invaluable feedback which will help us improve *China Tourism* magazine for you.

*Please mail this questionnaire to our office at 24/F, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong, or fax to (852) 2561 8196.

Jingxi Look-and-See Trip

Photos & Article • Huang Yanhong

On the border between China and Vietnam sits a small town called Jingxi. Though not a famous scenic spot, it is a paradise for photographers, the home of colourful Chinese silk balls and the setting for a beautiful legend about sacred geese that repay a man for his kindness. All of which add a delicate charm to this beautiful land.





I travelled to Guangxi from Shenzhen while my fellow tour mates flew in from Beijing. We planned to meet at Nanning Airport and go on to Jingxi together. Jingxi is said to possess a wonderful country flavour just made for being photographed. When we arrived in Nanning, Guangxi's capital, the sun was shining; the sky was crystal blue and we all felt great, an auspicious beginning for a trip.

Early on we passed the beautiful Aibu Waterfall and stopped the car immediately. The girl who had met us at the airport was also a big photography fan, and she said there was too much such scenery in this particular area. Further into the county, we passed her family's four-storey house. We were very envious of her until we learned that out in the county every family had their own home because the government encouraged people to get loans to build houses.

Preparing for the Excursion

The next day, we started off at 6 a.m. and boarded a bus for Jiuzhou, eight kilometres away. Our photography director, Kong Bing, was a very

nice retiree in his 60s. He has a great reputation among local photography enthusiasts; everyone calls him Professor Kong.

Professor Kong has been involved with photography for decades. He can bear hardship for his art and is not conservative. Local photographers follow him about, taking scenic pictures that replicate his style. Photographers come from all over to learn from his years of experience.

He led us into the highlands where we could overlook Jiuzhou. We parked at the foot of the mountain and Professor Kong led the way, carrying three cameras and a tripod. The day was very foggy. At the halfway point, we couldn't see anything clearly down the hill. Crops covered the mountain and the field paths were so wet and slippery we had trouble walking. Our shoes were soon covered in mud.

After bracing the tripod, we waited for the fog to disperse, imagining that the morning mist would lift layer by layer, slowly unveiling a very beautiful scene. However, even after the fog had completely disappeared, the scenery was not that great. I took





several photos anyway, so that it wasn't a complete waste of time.

After we came down from the mountain, we rushed to the riverside. A small stone bridge stood over the river, while vast paddy fields stretched out on either side. The faraway mountains seen faintly in the clouds and fog suggested a fairyland.

Sightseeing on Jiuzhou Old Street

We came to the old street of Jiuzhou (Old Prefecture). Just as we arrived at the entrance of the street, two village kids walked towards us, driving a herd of ducks out of the village. My companions lifted their cameras immediately. The kids didn't seem to mind being photographed, but the ducks did. They sped up and hurried away. We quickly followed them and, to our surprise, Professor Kong ran the fastest. He overtook the ducks and got to the stone bridge ahead of them. As he stood ready to photograph the approaching ducks, they suddenly disappeared. The paparazzi-shy birds must have suspected Professor Kong's intentions and dived into a nearby paddy field.

The east side of Jiuzhou Street is the most popular destination for photographers. Wenchang Pavilion on the islet in the middle of the Equan River adds the finishing touch to a picturesque scene. Green mountains provide a lush background, while the ancient three-storey square buildings stand out against the dawn. Wenchang Pavilion rises some 15 metres and has a floor area of 16 square metres. It was built in the Ming Dynasty (1368—1644).

On the ancient bridge under Wenchang Pavilion,

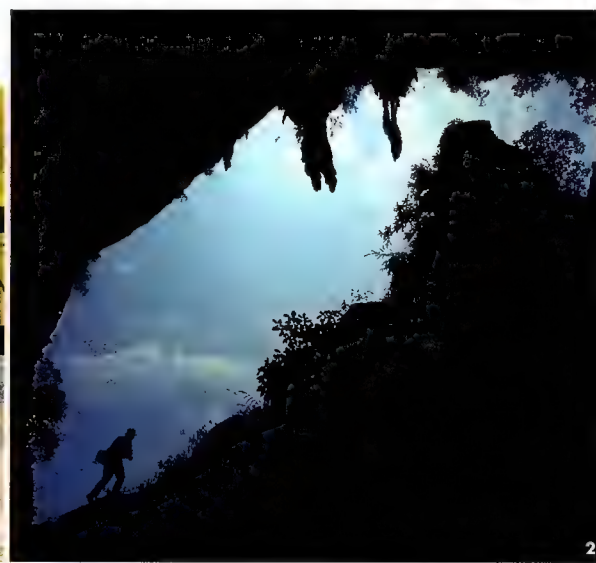
I met a primary school teacher who had long since retired. The 84-year-old man never sat idle and was endeavouring to engage in tourism. Every day before the tourists arrived, he would wait at the foot of Wenchang Pavilion selling horseback rides. He also raised the special breed of short local horses, not only to pass the time but also to earn extra money.

An overweight tourist intent on having a ride still showed his sympathy by not sitting on the horse for too long and not whipping it. When he was done, he paid the old man a little extra, insisting that he didn't want any change back.

Previous page:
This woman farmer is not very camera-shy

1. An old country woman at dawn
2. Colourful silk balls on display along a street in Jiuzhou
3. An old man and his small horses wait for business
4. Jingxi people enjoy a casual lifestyle, even when they are pushing their bikes
5. A dance that used to be performed to pray for favourable weather now entertains tourists





Silk Balls: A Proud Local Art

In Jiuzhou colourful silk balls are sold along a T-shaped street. The blue flagstone-paved road is permeated with an ancient atmosphere. The surrounding brick and tile buildings have all been renovated. About 500 households line the entire street, almost all of which are home to embroiderers. The door of every home features a horizontal board that describes the colourful silk balls. Various types of the delicate balls hang along both sides of the street, along with other embroidered items.

Colourful silk balls are not simply a traditional handicraft of Jiuzhou; in the past they were love mementos given and accepted between young people of the Zhuang ethnicity. The history of the colourful silk balls goes back more than 1,000 years; a Zhuang girl would embroider an exquisite silk ball as a keepsake for her sweetheart. The patterns on the balls are very delicate and the needlework is superb.

Watching colourful silk balls being hand-embroidered is fascinating entertainment. First, strips of silk of different colours are pasted to a piece of cloth, which is then cut into leaf-shaped panels. Patterns are then drawn onto the material and embroidered. After that, the panels are stuck together and the centre filled with sawdust. The whole is then stitched into a solid ball, which is finally decorated with beads or tassels. Most colourful silk balls are made of 12, 30 or more leaf-shaped panels.

I asked the craftspeople how many they could make in one day. They said they could produce three small or two medium-sized balls a day. The wholesale price for one ball was three yuan, meaning their average daily income was just six yuan at most. It seemed very unfair that everyone, including the very old and young, worked so hard for so little pay.

Jiuzhou's most famous embroiderer is the "Nimble-fingered Chinese Girl", a title bestowed by a former vice-premier of the State Council. The walls of her home are covered in awards that her family members have earned at colourful silk ball competitions. Now that her daughters and daughters-in-law are all involved in this work, every family member has become a nimble-fingered girl.

King of Colourful Silk Balls

Although the overwhelming majority of artisans involved in colourful silk ball production are women, there is one man so gifted that he has earned the title "King of Colorful Silk Balls". But the 50-something Zhu Xuxian is not only King of Colourful Silk Balls; he is also a famous folk singer.

In 1984, a grand performance, the first of its kind, was held on the third day of the third lunar month in Guangxi. Zhu Xuxian went there to sing and perform the dance of the colourful silk balls with three other people. His aunt had made a very small silk ball that she tied to his waist just for the occasion. The foreign guests in attendance loved the performance. Afterwards, an American gave him 30 US dollars for the small silk ball. Instantly realizing the potential business opportunity, Zhu Xuxian returned to Jiuzhou and began making colourful silk balls.

Thanks to that incident, the art of colourful silk balls that had been buried for ages has now resurfaced. Still, Zhu Xuxian is upset that colourful silk balls are now being made by machines elsewhere. The rough quality of these imitations has hurt the art form's reputation. He showed me a silk ball bought in Guilin; the outer patterns were not hand-embroidered and the insides were stuffed with worn-out cotton.

During our conversation, what he mentioned most was his daughter, Zhu Hongqiao. She started to learn

1. For 15 yuan apiece, buffalo "models" strut their stuff on the bridge at Goose Spring
2. The stone cave at Tongling Waterfall scenic area
3. Tongling Waterfall is a must-see for visitors to Jingxi



embroidery about six years old. Now she is 21 and has graduated from a vocational school of tourism. After graduation, she has worked as a tourist guide in Guilin. Later, she came back home, and has become a well-known princess of colourful silk balls.

Not long ago, at the commemorative activity of the World Women's Conference held in Beijing, Zhu Hongqiao's performance of making colourful silk balls drew the interest many international representatives. After the Congo President's wife heard that the colourful silk ball represents love, she expressed her desire right away of giving one to her husband.

Legend of the Grateful Geese

Six kilometres from the county proper lies Goose Spring. In the sixth year of the reign of Chenghua (1470) during the Ming Dynasty, after seeing its graceful mountains and rivers, Emperor Jiajing named this place "Sacred Spring of Evening Glow". In ancient times, the third day of the third lunar month was a big day at Goose Spring. On this day, officials and the public would throw rice into the spring and

strike gongs and drums. Fish in the spring jumped up to compete for the food, splashing water everywhere.

There is an islet in the middle of Goose Spring on which the ruins of an ancient temple sit. Among the ruins are three stone tablets bearing the engraving "Tablet of Goose Spring Pavilion". It is said that long ago an old man called Yang Yun found some goose eggs here and used his own body heat to hatch them. As he'd never been a father, he took care of the geese as if they were his own children. Later, they turned out to be sacred geese. In order to repay Yang Yun for his kindness, they transformed this place into a kind of Xanadu.

What separates Goose Spring from other scenic spots is that it is still part of people's everyday lives. Farmers harvest and thrash grain here; village boys shepherd buffalo and play in the water. The old way of developing and managing a tourist spot by dispersing all the villagers and making the area solely a tourism destination was abandoned, so everyone can experience the pristine surroundings.

Goose Spring's crystal clear water gushes up from



more than 10 metres below the ground. A delegation of experts from Japan took water samples here. After tests, they declared Goose Spring's water to be cleaner than the distilled water sold in stores. Therefore, experts now claim this as "the cleanest water in the world".

It is known that fish do not thrive in extremely clean water, but Goose Spring is filled with fish. Schools of fish swim around and can often be seen jumping up and entertaining visitors. I had bought some fish food and was planning to feed them when several ducks suddenly appeared. I threw some to the birds, hoping there might be some sacred ducks among them that would repay me somehow in the future. Actually, it was strange that the ducks, which were about 70 metres away, all flocked to where I had thrown the fish food, as if they had received a text message that it was coming. As they competed for the food, they moved like ballet dancers on the water.

Modelling Buffalo and Fried Eggs with Floating Grass

An old Qing Dynasty-era 15-arch bridge, about 60 metres long and 1.5 metres wide, stretches over Goose Spring.

At sunset, another larger bridge near the ancient bridge was packed with photographers, 30 of whom were part of a photography tour group from Zhuzhou.

Professor Kong took on the role of general director and spared no effort in arranging everything. The sun was setting, reddening the stone bridge and casting

shadows across the arches. We all watched anxiously in the hope that some buffalo might appear. After being asked repeatedly about this possibility, Professor Kong paid a farmer 30 yuan to walk one large and one small buffalo back and forth over the stone bridge a few times while the camera buffs snapped away.

The dinner we ate that night was particularly special. We were served Fried Eggs with Floating Grass, which was unbelievably fresh and tasty. If I hadn't actually seen the waiter pick the floating grass out of the river with my own eyes, I wouldn't have believed it. This dish won a gold medal at the Gourmet Festival of the Baise Region. Then we had another delicious dish made with floating grass picked directly from the lake, seasoned and quickly stir-fried.

Looking for Caravans in Ande

I was drawn to Ande by a famous oil painting that depicts winding mountain roads and groups of caravans trudging along the cliff sides. I was told the painting was of Ande. However, once the village roads were opened to traffic, with exception of some remote mountainous areas, caravans became rarer and rarer.

Ande's market is very old and first appeared in the early Tang Dynasty (618—907), making it older than Jingxi County. Walking around, I soaked up the pure country atmosphere. Everything seemed new to us and we couldn't help following the flow of people.

Scenes long lost from other parts of China revealed themselves here and there. We lifted our cameras and took shot after shot as the local villagers were very friendly and welcoming.

Next, we visited Tongling Canyon. Among its many waterfalls, Tongling ("Connected to Spirits") Waterfall is the most famous. Situated at the bottom of the valley, the 186-metre high waterfall is the tallest single-stair waterfall in Asia.

From there we headed to Erlang to view other falls. On our way we passed Nama Hamlet of Luolong Village where we saw a Wenchang Pavilion with local country features that was built in the 29th year of the reign of Daoguang (1821—1850). As we entered we noticed an old stone tablet inscribed with the village rules, which read: "Bamboo may not be grown in front of doorways or on the street. Anyone who breaks the rule shall be punished." We jokingly wondered aloud if forestation was promoted at the time.

Erlang does not charge an entrance fee, and it has some waterfalls flying down and disappearing in to the paddy fields below. Nearby are villages with some pole-supported houses. While we rested, we heard the following story:

A young man who left the village to work found a girlfriend. He boasted to her that his family had a three-storey building. The first storey was the Bureau of Stock Raising, the second, the Bureau of Human Resources, and the third, the Bureau of Food. After they married, he took her home to meet his family. On seeing the simple parapet-style building, the girl became angry and thought she had been cheated. The young man then explained to her that the first storey housed the domestic animals, the second housed the humans and the third stored the food. So he had not lied to her!

We wanted to listen to more stories, but uproarious laughter from afar diverted our attention. We rushed to the source of the fun and saw a group of naked little boys playing in the water and two bamboo rafts floating on the water. When they noticed us taking photos, they started shouting and performing various silly diving moves for us. I took loads of pictures. If I were still young, I would have taken off my clothes and jumped into the water to play with those lovely kids.

Translated by Nicole Ouyang



Travel Tips

Accommodation Jingxi has as many hotels as there are grains of sand.

In the county proper, the Jingxi Hotel and Great Jingxi Hotel offer rooms with double beds from about 100~150 yuan per day. There are also a lot of family hostels, priced from 20~100 yuan per day.

Sightseeing Entrance ticket prices: Jiuzhou's Street of Colourful Silk Balls, 5 yuan; Goose Spring, 5 yuan; Tongling Valley scenic area, 46 yuan. A full-trip ticket to explore the valleys of Ancient Dragon Mountain is 138 yuan, while a half-trip ticket is 68 yuan.

Jiuzhou is 9 km south of Jingxi County proper. Goose Spring is situated in southwest Jingxi. These three scenic spots form a triangle. To avoid unnecessary detours, visit Goose Spring first, Jiuzhou next and Jingxi last.

Transport If going by car from Beijing, take national highway 324 to Nanning, then drive through Long'an, Pingguo, Tiandong, Debao to arrive at Jingxi. From Jingxi, you can easily find many routes to each scenic spot. It takes 4~5 hours to drive from Nanning to Jingxi.

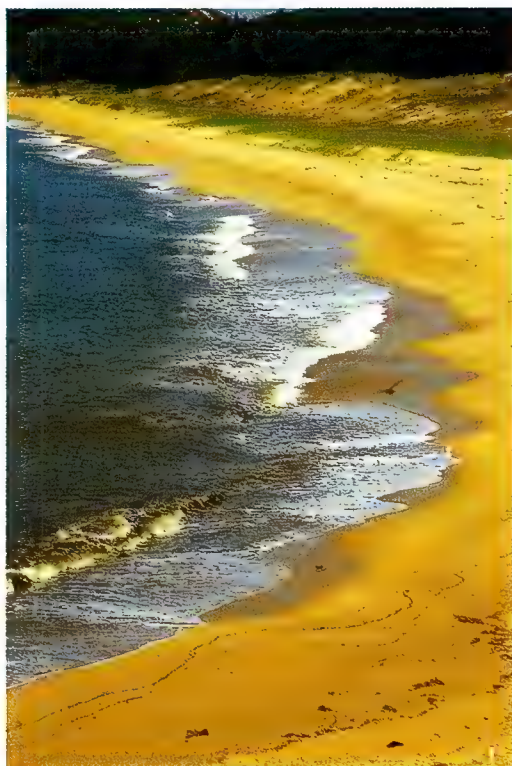
1. Professor Kong prepares to take a panoramic photo of Jiuzhou
2. Two villagers carry farming implements to sell at the local market
3. Children splash around in the water



Discovering Turtle Bay

Photos & Article • Walia

Not far from Hong Kong in Guangdong Province lies Huidong, with its beautiful crescent-shaped bay. Of the country's 18,000 km coastline, this 800-metre stretch of beach is the only place in China where sea turtles lay their eggs. Only 16 such sea turtle "nurseries" exist throughout the world.



Turtle Bay, as it's known, is now a national nature reserve. On the map, Renping Peninsula, where Turtle Bay is located, resembles a turtle crawling into the South China Sea, with the turtle's head coinciding with the position of the nature reserve.

Concealed by mountains on three sides, Turtle Bay is blessed with all the favourable conditions that

induce turtles to land and lay their eggs: a beach open to the sea in a semi-tropical zone; little wind or waves; and clear water with more than 3 per cent salinity at a consistent temperature of about 28°C. Moreover, the beach is moderately sloped with soft, evenly distributed sand. Their fastidious breeding site requirements being met, sea turtles have migrated and reproduced here for many generations. In the past, from June to September, hundreds of female turtles landed on the beach and laid thousands of eggs; hence the name, "Turtle Bay".

Over-Hunting and Low Survival Rate

In the Turtle Museum at Turtle Bay, several huge specimens are on display, including a leatherback sea turtle that was rescued and nursed by nature reserve staff. Unfortunately, the turtle committed suicide by hitting its head against a wall. An autopsy revealed a great deal of blood in its stomach. Staff members said this breed of turtle is the hardest to feed, because they are strong-willed, freedom-loving and cannot bear any pain caused by disease.

Of the more than 200 breeds of tortoise in the world, only eight are sea turtles, the green sea turtle, hawksbill turtle, and leatherback sea turtle among them. The South China Sea is home to green sea turtles mainly.

The sea turtles are classified as second-level protected endangered species. At present, only about

4,000 such turtles live in the South China Sea.

More than 30 years ago, villagers could still see 10 or so turtles landing one by one to lay their eggs every night during the breeding season, with hundreds of turtles coming to the beach over a summer. Their visits have declined in recent years, however, with only two turtles sighted in 2002, 12 in 2003, eight in 2004 and eight by the end of September 2005.

Studies by animal protection experts attribute much of the decrease to the capturing and killing of turtles by local inhabitants in the past.

With the establishment of the nature reserve, catching turtles has been forbidden. Yet the turtles are still threatened by port construction in the vicinity of Turtle Bay, as well as such illegal practices as dynamite blasting and electrical-shock fishing. The immediate surrounding environment is also deteriorating; on the beach I saw enormous amounts of waste that had been brought in by the tide. Even after being cleared away, it quickly piles up again.

The problem has been a major headache for the reserve area staff. Everyday waste dumped by seashore inhabitants creates the possibility for genetic variations in turtles and also hinders the turtles from landing.

Apart from protecting the adult turtles, the nature reserve staff members also try to help raise the newborns. Adult turtles have few natural enemies in the sea, but curiously only six out of 10,000 newborn turtles are able to survive. In the dangerous sea, the babies often become delicious treats for crabs and sea birds. The staff members nurture the infant turtles for one to two years until they weigh at least two kilograms, then send them back to the sea.

Unfortunately, due to limited finances, the nature reserve can only look after a small fraction of all the baby turtles. As for the rest, there is no choice but to let them return to the sea where they face the challenges of nature alone.

We came across a group of kids participating in

1. The water in Turtle Bay has not yet been polluted
2. The mother turtle covers her eggs with sand to protect them



a summer camp activity to release turtles back to the wild. The Turtle Bay reserve has run this charity project since 2000. Each year, more than 200 turtles are returned to the sea. The fundraising efforts of many kind people make it possible to save, feed and raise more baby turtles.

On the beach, more than 20 children conducted a ceremony to free a three-year-old turtle. Standing in a circle, each child touched the turtle's back and spoke a message of goodwill. Most said, "I wish you a safe journey", though some sentiments were more imaginative, such as "I wish that you grow as huge as a mountain so that you'll never be bullied." Some wishes provoked loud laughter: "I hope you find an ideal partner and come back together when you both grow up."

Baby Turtles Take Their First Steps

Mr. Yang, Section Chief of the Reserve, told me that the birth of a turtle is a tough process. Immediately after hatching, a baby turtle is too weak to dig itself

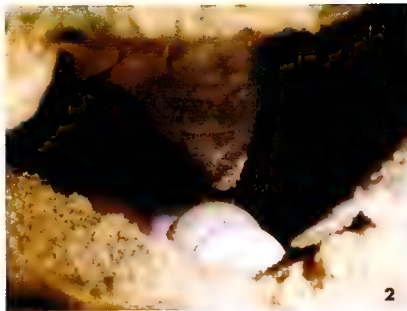
out from the heavy sand by itself. It won't make it until all its brothers and sisters enter this world and join in the effort.

I became so interested that I decided to have a look for myself. I was informed that a big turtle had landed on June 14th, meaning her babies would be born in about 50 days. So from the 45th day on, I kept in touch on the mother's progress. On the 50th day, I hurried to Turtle Bay. The technician in charge on that day was Zhang Feiyan, a graduate of the Zhanjiang Marine Product Institute in Guangdong.

Together we walked toward the hole where the eggs had been laid. From a distance, Zhang pointed out a wiry cage covered by grasses. One metre in diameter, the cage was laid over the hole on the 40th day to prevent crabs and snakes from attacking the eggs. The grass camouflaged the site well.

Removing the cage, Zhang noticed a small hole in the sand nearby. Had the baby turtles run away? We quickly dug down. At a depth of 50 cm, we saw a crab waiting next to the eggs. Obviously it had dug the hole and sat ready for a feast.





2



3



4

As it was still too early to watch the turtles being born, we replaced the cage and left. Several days later, we returned to the spot.

"Fifty-three days have passed; we have to find out what happened to them," Zhang said to me while digging up the sand. When he reached 20 cm, he started scooping with his hands to avoid harming the fragile creatures. Finally, several baby turtles appeared. Zhang gently removed them with both hands. As he continued, many more baby turtles were found. Some were struggling to make their way out as others jumped onto them from the walls of the hole. Soon more than 30 baby turtles sporting beautiful black-and-white patterns on their backs gathered together at the bottom of the hole, wriggling around. These lovely little creatures were taking the first steps of their lives. We stood and watched, amazed.

Altogether, apart from three sour eggs and three dead turtles, 101 babies had emerged. We carried them back to the reserve in a bucket, stopping briefly to place some 20 turtles on the beach as part of an experiment. The little creatures all ran wildly towards the sea.

When we reached the Technology Department, Zhang began to examine their bodies to see: whether

their umbilical cords had contracted or become malformed; whether the 13 marginal, lateral and vertebral shields were intact; and whether their snouts were white (if so, they probably had an infection). Zhang said that though they now weighed only 50 g each, in a year they would grow to 2 kg. The turtles were quite healthy, except for four that had been squeezed by the others, their bellies scratched by roots, but they would easily recover.

1. Newborn turtles wriggle and try to make their way out of the sand
2. The mother turtle lays her eggs
3. Examining the newborn turtles
4. Adult turtles in their aquatic breeding ground

The Giant Sea Turtle Finally Lands

Over the past two years, we erected tents on the beach many times and waited to help protect the giant sea turtle. But none ever came. Then one day in August 2005, we were told that a mother-to-be was heading to the bay. Zhang, four university students, a reserve staff member and I were patrolling the beach at about one in the morning. Suddenly, Zhang stood still and motioned to us to stop. He walked on alone, then came back quickly, saying in a low voice, "It's coming up."

Zhang called Guan, the other staff member on duty, then shut off his cell phone. We all did the same and tried hard not to make any noise. Some 10

How do turtles migrate?

In recent years, some countries, including China, have used satellite technology to follow turtles during their migrations. Each time a turtle surfaces for air, special tracking devices placed on the turtles' backs switch on automatically and transmit information, via satellite, about each turtle's immediate marine environment, including what's happening underwater, and the activity patterns and daily routines of the turtles.

In 2002, Turtle Bay staff members installed tracking devices on three turtles: one turtle went to Taiwan and another swam to the Xisha Islands, while the third was found in Japan, its tracking device broken. The Japanese attached a new device to the turtle and set it free, mailing the broken device back to China.

The main focus of these studies is how turtles migrate to lay their eggs. Turtles mature by the age of 10 and lay eggs from age 30 to 100. Amazingly, they are able to return to their birthplace to deposit their own eggs after 30 years away, often travelling hundreds of kilometres to do so.

In the vast seas, even humans must rely on maps, compasses, lighthouses, navigators and experience to find their way. Some scientific studies suggest that turtles follow their "olfactory glands" to track the odour of the place where they were born; others believe they observe the position of the sun and stars to chart their course; still others allege that the hypothalamus, a part of the brain that controls the turtles' biological rhythms, leads them back, in similar fashion to the "biological clock" functions found in some migratory fish.

American scientists recently discovered that turtles learn from a very young age how to position themselves in alignment with the Earth's magnetic field, creating a magnetic map in their bodies. The scientists put a large vat full of seawater into a huge magnetic loop and adjusted the loop to create a specific magnetic field. When the magnetic field changed, turtles placed in the vat changed direction accordingly. The scientists also found that the older the turtle, the more accurately it positioned itself, proving that turtles learn this skill from infancy.

metres ahead of us, we saw what looked like the impression of bulldozer treads in the sand — the path of a giant sea turtle.

We followed Zhang, tiptoeing along behind the turtle's tracks. But they disappeared at the edge of the vegetation. Zhang stopped us again and listened attentively for a while. Then he climbed up a slope on the beach. Undoubtedly this turtle was a responsible mother. In order to protect her babies from the incoming tide, she had crawled all the way up to where the sand met the grasses and vines, even though it would be much harder for her to dig a hole for her babies here.

Zhang returned. By now, many others, including Guan and several university students, had arrived. We all sat on the beach, careful to be quiet.

Though it was too dark to see what the mother turtle was doing, I held my breath, filled with excitement. Mixed in with the gentle slosh of the waves and the singing of the cicadas was a slight rustling made by the mother turtle digging. Sand whooshed out from the grasses from time to time. After eight or nine fruitless visits over the past two years, my dream was finally coming true. I was about to watch this great mother turtle creating new life.

I was quite nervous that any sound, even a cough, would scare her and make her retreat. If that happened, we would miss a precious chance. Suddenly some barking was heard in the distance. The reserve's guard dog was barrelling in our direction. Guan made a quick detour around the mother turtle to stop the dog and drive it back to the reserve, averting certain disaster.

Close-up of the Giant Turtle

About an hour later, the rustling stopped. Zhang crept closer to the turtle. Several minutes later, he turned on his flashlight and waved us over. We knew then that the turtle was laying her eggs. In this state of concentration, not even gongs and drums would deter her until she was finished.

As we moved closer to the turtle, a fantastic scene greeted us. The turtle had dug itself into a one square-metre hole with its front claws and was now depositing eggs into a smaller, 30 cm-deep hole scooped out by its back claws. The stair-shaped hole was a masterpiece of engineering created by the mother turtle. Had the hole collapsed, the turtle would have given up laying eggs. The poor mother, her front claws scratched from digging in the vine-entangled ground, was now completely exhausted. One by





one, the eggs dropped lightly from her body into the small hole.

In the beam of the flashlight, we could see that the mother turtle was in great pain, tears welling in her eyes. To give birth to her own babies, she had travelled all the way back to her own birthplace, from which she had been away so many years, and afterwards she would leave them behind. I wondered whether, someday, if she met her babies again, they would recognize the mother who had suffered so giving birth to them.

Mother Turtle Back to the Sea

About half an hour later, the gruelling delivery finally ended. The mother turtle was worn out. Lying motionless over the hole, she had a quiet rest. But not long after, she began to push the sand back into the hole to cover the eggs.

With great effort, Zhang dragged the turtle out onto the beach to help spare her some strength. But she was not grateful in the least; on the contrary, she became a bit angry and continued to rake the sand in the direction of the nest. Perhaps she did not realize she had already left the hole. She only knew she must cover her babies with sand in order to prevent them from being harmed.

Guan ran up to the exhausted turtle and held her

front claws, while Zhang tagged her.

The tide began rolling in, flooding the beach. Called by its pull, the turtle turned around and crept slowly toward the sea. We followed her and saw her off. Watching her disappear into the dark night, we all prayed for her silently.



Translated by Ouyang Nicole

1. Newborn turtles crawl toward the sea in step
2. Baby turtles swim into the sea accompanied by the good wishes of the children
3. Teenagers wish the baby turtle a safe journey

Travel Tips

Guangdong Province
廣東省

Daya Bay
大亞灣

Pinghai
平海

Gangkou
港口

Turtle Bay
海龜灣

Transportation: Take the shuttle bus from the Luohu long-distance bus station in Shenzhen to Pinghai in Huidong, and then transfer to a minibus to the port. From here, it's a 20-minute walk to Turtle Bay.

Lodging: The turtle nature reserve provides lodging, while hostels are available in Pinghai and Gangkou.

Ticket: 20 yuan

The Slow Evolution of Sea Turtles

Turtles are some of the most ancient creatures in the world and the oldest in the family of tortoises. Protected by a thick shell, they may weigh more than 150 kg. Turtles stay in the sea year round. Only the females go ashore, to lay eggs during the breeding season from April to October. Turtles mainly feed on vegetation such as seaweed, though sometimes they eat fish and shrimp. Having no teeth, they "chew" their food with the help of a keratinous (fibrous protein) mouth. The constant sea-dwellers have a gland behind each eye that releases excess salt in the body.

Interestingly, turtles have scarcely evolved over time. Upon discovering turtle fossils from 100 million years ago, including the remains of 12 turtle species, palaeontologists in western Queensland, Australia were surprised to find that the fossils were almost identical to modern-day turtles.



The delivery ends

In a vigorous attempt to promote tourism, Ningbo in East China's Zhejiang Province has developed quite a number of new attractions as well as renovated existing tourist spots.

Retro Spots in Ningbo

Three Ancient Towns of Ningbo

Qiantong

The ancient town is renowned for having preserved more than 1,300 residences of authentic Ming- and Qing-dynasty styles. Among the 2,000 households, about 80 per cent of residents have the surname of Tong. The ancestors of the Tongs diverted the nearby Baixi (White Stream) into the village to form a "water bagua (Eight Trigrams)". Winding pebbly lanes, age-old streets and shrines can be seen in the town.

Transport: Take bus No. 108 or 102 from Ningbo South Station to Ninghai Terminus, and then take No. 2 bus at Ninghai Road West
Opening hours: 8:00~17:00



Shipu Fishing Port

Located in central Zhejiang and south

end of Xiangshan (Elephant Hill) in Ningbo city, Shipu is a famous historical and cultural town of provincial level. The Shipu Old Street, originally built in the Ming Dynasty (1368—1644), is a tortuous and sloping stretch with huddles of houses clinging to the hillside. Roaming along the shiny slabstones street and visiting nostalgic stores, you feel as if you had travelled back in time. The ancient city of Shipu Fishing Port was formally opened in April 2005. A number of 12 museums have been built to feature in introducing the aspects of the fishing port.

Transport: Long distance bus to Xiangshan Quan, and then mini-bus to the ancient city

Opening hours: 8:00~17:00



Cicheng

The Cicheng ancient town is one of the historical sites under key development in Ningbo. New attractions include the Nanmen (South Gate) Plaza, Xunfang Scenic Area, traditional mansions, Confucius Temple, old government office and examination hall, and Cihu Lake. Local authorities will invest RMB 700 million to repair other heritage sites as well as the Taihu Road.

Transport: Can be reached by bus No. 331, 335, or 337

Admission: Currently free Opening hours: 8:00~17:30

A Taste of Folk Culture

Qing'an Assembly Hall

Also known as Tianhou Gong (Palace of the Goddess of Sea), the assembly hall was completed in the third year of Qing Emperor Xianfeng's reign (1853). One of the eight most famous Tianhou palaces and seven great assembly halls in China, it functions as both a place to worship the Goddess and a meeting venue. The brick and stone carvings, as well as stone sculpture painted in vermeil and gold have reflected traditional Ningbo art.

Transport: Bus No. 2, 821, or 215 stops at the entrance; No. 518,

506, 503, 8, 10, or 604 stops at about 100 metres from the hall
Opening hours: 8:00~17:30 (summer), 8:00~17:00 (winter)

Rediscover Traditional Attractions

Yuehu Scenic Area

Yuehu (Moon Lake) is located at the south-west of Ningbo city, and is locally known as Xihu (West Lake) or the Hushihe (River West of the Lake). The Yuehu of today, which has undergone large-scale renovation and development, has preserved and repaired the original relics in the scenic area. New sights such as various styles of pavilions, platforms, gazebos, balconies, small bridges and streams have also been added.

The scenic area is home to the Yintaidi Museum which showcases the living environment and home decor of the ruling class in the mid- to late Qing Dynasty. Yintaidi was the name of a mansion built by Tong Huai, a local of Ningbo, during the Qing Emperor Daoguang's reign (1821—1851).

Transport: Take a bus to Railway Station South and walk for 5 minutes
Opening hours: 8:00~17:00



Ningbo Old Bund

Although less famous, the Ningbo Bund actually pre-dated its counterpart in Shanghai by 20 years, and was opened for foreign trade after the First Opium War (Treaty of Nanjing, 1842). Viewing from the riverside park, tourist can enjoy a panorama of three rivers flowing around the bund. Modern buildings and cross-river bridge creates an interesting contrast with the old buildings.

Transport: Take a taxi is recommended

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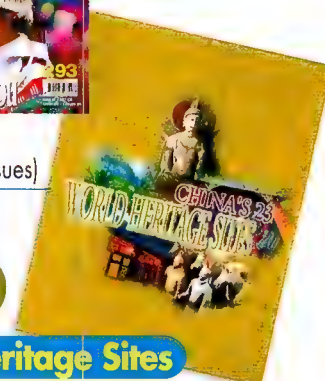
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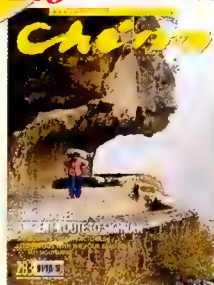
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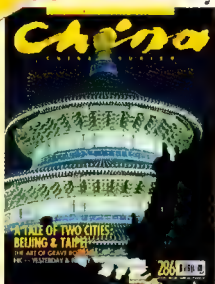
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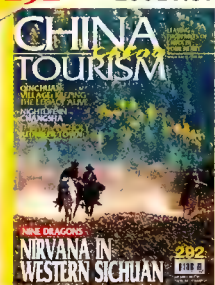
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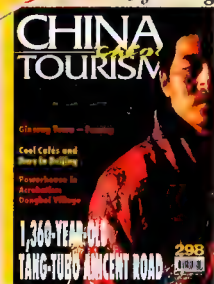
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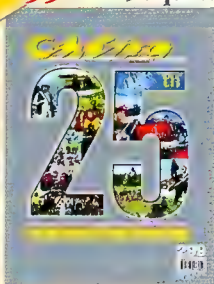
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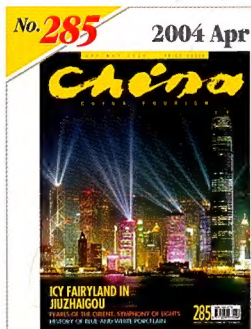


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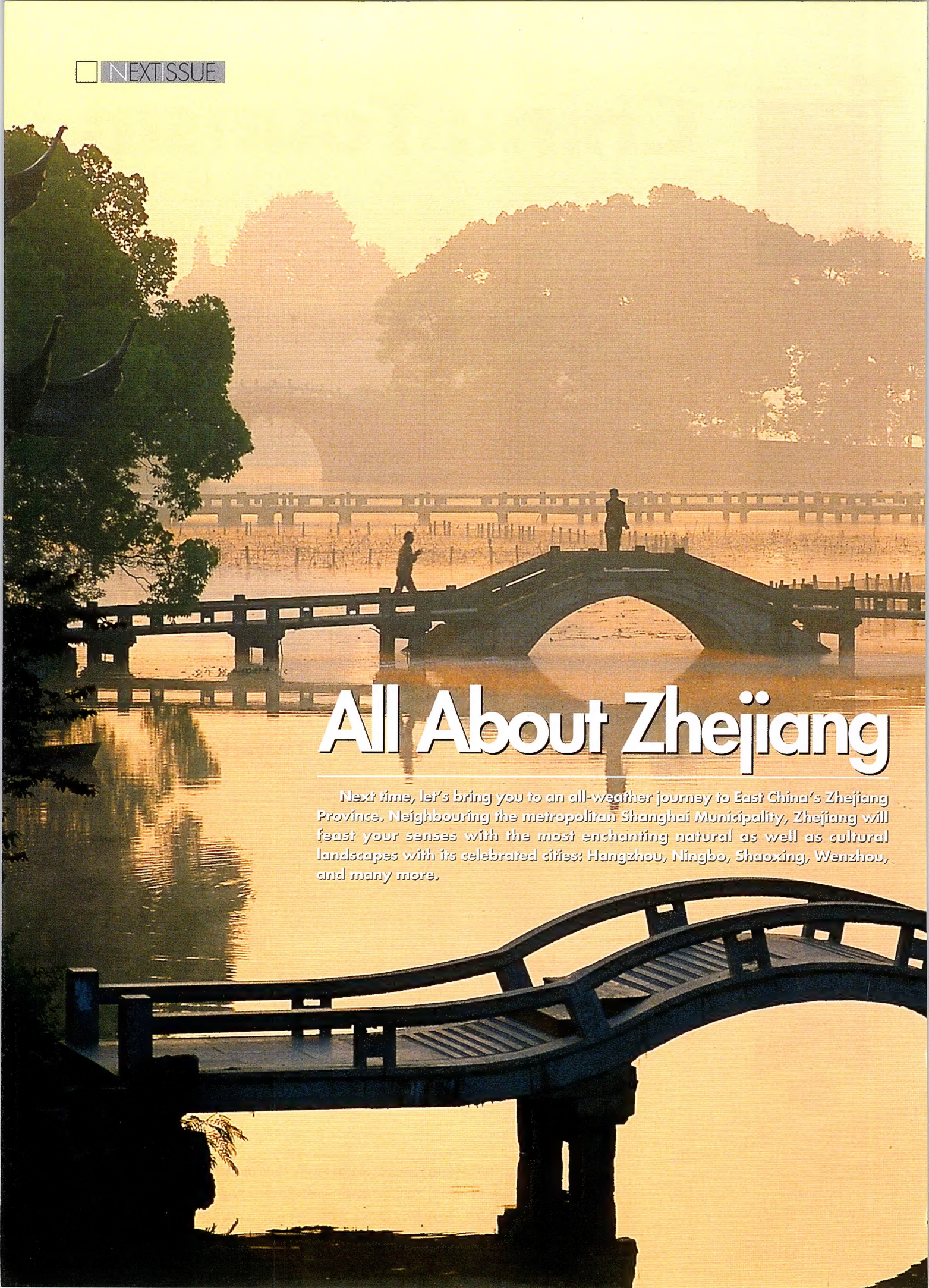
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